

# BOY SCOUTS' DEFIANCE



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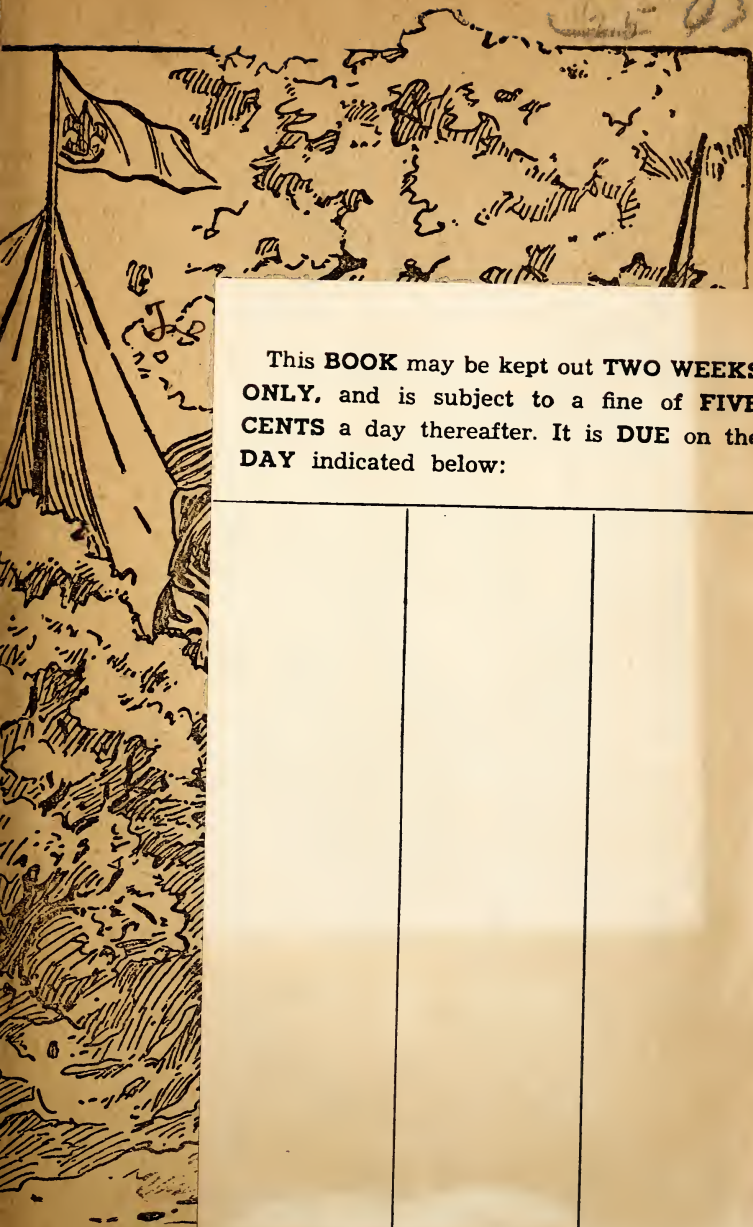
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*Boy Scout Series Volume 10*

# The Boy Scouts' Defiance

OR

Will Ransier's Heroic Act

BY

Colonel George Durston

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# The Boy Scouts'

## Defiance

### CHAPTER I

#### A DASH FOR LIFE

"It is not what it is cracked up to be," said Will Ransier gloomily. He leaned wearily against the iron railing outside the waiting-room of the trolley station.

"What's not what it's cracked up to be, Fat?" asked Tony Keene, the boy beside him.

"Money," said Will, bitterly. "*Money!* Look what it's done to me. Here I am stuck in an old flat. *Flat!* I won't say apartment, no matter how the janitor glares. Stuck in an old flat when I ought to be out there in Lafayette skinning Jack McDermott out of all of his miggles. It makes me sore! Honest, if it keeps up I'll go to boarding-school and get quit of it!"

"Don't do that," said Tony hastily, shocked at the threat. If Fatty Ransier was sore enough to want to go to boarding-school then the case *was* serious.

"Gee, you don't know what your talkin' about.



You don't want to quit the bunch like that. You don't know what will turn up. Your folks didn't sell the place in Lafayette, did they? Perhaps your father will lose his money."

"Naw, he won't!" groaned Fatty. "First place, Dad isn't the losing kind, and, second place, that old land he bought down there in Virginia just fairly spouts oil all over it. Oh, I'm in for it all right! I tell you the only fun I have, Tone, is guying the janitor in the flat. He's none of your Mr. Browns, I can tell you. He's English or Dutch or something, and he goes in for swells. There are two smart little sissy-boys in the Alhambra (you know that's the name of the flat where we live), and one of 'em is my age, and one is a year older: and they carry *canes*. Honest, Tony, I'm going to dent those little boys way in some day, if I get pulled for it.

"Well, Peters, the janitor, when he sees the Carrolls, he bows and scrapes, and when they ride up and down, he runs that elevator as if he had a sick baby in it: and it's 'Good morning, Mr. Carroll, sir! Fine day, sir!' The fellows treat him like dirt, too.

"I couldn't see through it, so I thought I'd experiment. One *whole week* I treated him as good as I knew how: just as sweet as a peach. It was 'Good morning, Peters! Fine day!' and a sunny smile from your little Willie, but the Peters man never thawed. Next week I treated him like a yel-

low dog. Cussed him out if the elevator didn't get right there, and was a mean actor generally. Little Peters just acted as mean as I did.

"Next week I never saw him. Didn't know but what the elevator ran itself. Took my time and kept him waiting all I knew how. Nothing doing. And all the while those smart Carroll children were being petted to death. I was crazy to see through it. It didn't seem as if Peters could be such a fool as he acted. Well, the next week, Tony, I hit it!"

"How so?" grinned Tony.

"It was just a little matter of *tips*, just simple little tips. I started in with a cigar. Gee! Peters nearly fell out of the elevator. It was so sudden and unexpected from me, you know. Next day I donated a quarter, and two days later a half. He told me he had been a 'gentleman's man' in England, and would like to press my pants. Only he said 'trousers.' The next day I dropped a dollar into his pocket when he was looking, and say, Tone, it was money well spent! Peters can't see the Carroll kids at all when yours truly is there. Now I have it down to a science. I don't donate a cent until he's most crazy, and then I kind of wake up as if I'd forgotten all about it, and feed him some. Keeps him guessing, you know!

"I certainly do hate his sort. Always trying to bleed you. Little snipe!"

"I didn't think he looked as bad as all that,"

said Tony. "He looked kind of sick to me, or else as if something bothered him. It can't be much of a cinch to have that job. I wouldn't like it."

"Well, you wouldn't like him either if you lived with him the way I have to. I tell you, Tone, it's worse than that to live in town."

Tony was silent for a few minutes; he was busy pressing his name on a piece of aluminum in the printing machine beside him.

"Well, Fat," he said finally, "you make me feel so good about it, that I guess I'll have to tell you the news. Don't spread it, but the fact is, we are in the same boat!"

"What boat?" asked the amazed Fatty. "You mean money?"

"No such luck," said Tony Keene. "Only we've got to bring Fred to town for a few months or a year perhaps. Until fall, anyhow. If he can be treated every day, the doctors say his lameness can be cured; so we've got to come in with him."

Fatty stood still for a full minute. Then he flapped his thin, long arms wildly about his head and let out a war-whoop of pure joy. When he could come down to facts, he said:

"Tone, you are the only original tight wad. Why didn't you tell me this before?"

"Just found it out," said Tony. "I am not crazy over it myself: but of course if it will help Fred, why, it's all right — and they are dead sure that it will help him. He's getting better all the



time; but if he could have a treatment every day it would hustle things up. And the poor kid is so crazy to get well."

"Must cost a small wad," said Fatty. "All the electrical flummy-diddle."

"Don't you know about it?" asked Tony. "I thought I told you. Mr. Smith is doing it for Fred. Told mother that he was going to do it anyhow, and the obligation was all on his side because Fred had done so much for him."

"Gee, but that sounds just like him," said Fatty, raising his cap to the absent Mr. Smith. "Isn't he the fine and dandy old peach?"

"He sure is," said Tony. "He told mother that he hated arguments and that he would rather not talk about it. He has an empty flat here, and we are to take that."

"Well, say," said Fatty, "did you mean to go off with all this dope bottled up and never give me any of it? You ought to get your head punched!"

"No, I thought I'd tell you, although I had made up my mind to spring it on you when we came."

"You sprang enough, I must say," said Fatty. "Gee, Tony, but it's good news! Now I feel like a human being. When are you coming?"

"Next week," said Tony.

"Well, you are going to hate it something fierce," warned Fatty. "But two of us—Gee, Tone, I'll hand you one of the Carrolls. You can

never say I'm not generous. You can help me spend some of Dad's money, too."

"Why, sure," laughed Tony, "your Dad will like that."

"Sure thing he will," said Will, earnestly. "Dad has a new scheme. He lets me have about enough for two boys. It's about six times as much as I ever had before, but he says he wants to see how good a use I can put it to. He and I have a business talk every Saturday night, and if I've done any monkey stunts with my little wad, why, he calls me down."

"Well, here's my car," said Tony. "You'll see me soon!"

"Why can't I come out with the automobile and bring Fred and your mother to town?" yelled Fatty as the car slowly started.

Tony nodded and waved. And Will, happier than he had been since his father's business interests had brought them to town, hurried up Paul street with a light step.

"Hello, little boy!" cried his mother, as he entered the apartment. She was full three inches shorter than Will, and so bright looking that Will always said she sparkled. Her light hair curled softly, and she had pink cheeks like a girl's. Will was proud of his mother.

"Hello, poor old motherkin!" he said, kissing her on the tip of her nose.

"I want to go down town, Will, if you will drive the car. I do not like that new man."

"Sure," said Will. "He's down there now. I'll go down and tell him he needn't wait. Say, mother, I've got the *best* news. Mrs. Keene and Tony and Fred are coming in town to live this summer: what do you know about that?"

Mrs. Ransier sat down limply upon the divan.

"In town?" she asked. "What for?"

Then Will told her.

"Well, I am *delighted*," she said when he had finished. "I love Mary Keene, and it will be so nice to have her here. I am glad you offered to go and get them, son. We will drive out tomorrow and ask if we can do something to help about moving or settling."

"That's a good plan," said Will, and ran down to the automobile.

The Alhambra was the first apartment house in the city of Syrchester, and occupied a corner on Paul street. The Ransier automobile, a big six cylinder touring car, stood against the curb and Fatty sat at the wheel waiting for his mother. She was a long time. Fatty thought he would get the car cranked up and go around the block. He got out and stood by the big hood, noticing as he did so a boy on a bicycle coasting rapidly down Paul street hill. He stopped, then straightened up as he heard a crash and a cry.

A big gray racing car was booming up the hill,



and on the pavement, almost at his feet, lay the boy who but a moment before had ridden down the hill. Fatty ran to his side, remembering with a leap of the heart his training in First Aid to the Injured. This was one of the things required of the Boy Scouts, and Fatty had worked hard to master the lessons. He had practiced on his father and mother and the cat—to say nothing of the fellows. With the exception of a couple of boys that Fatty, who was a fine swimmer, had rescued from drowning, this was his first real case: and to his credit be it said that Fatty's presence of mind did not fail him.

It was noon and the street was almost deserted: but Will knelt by the unconscious and bloody figure and gently straightened it. One leg was broken, and a great lump on the back of the boy's head was rapidly growing larger. Across his temple ran a long, ugly cut; but the worst was a gash across his left wrist, from which the blood leaped in little jets. Will gave one look about for help, then set swiftly to work. A grocery wagon drove by and stopped. It was as though a signal had been sounded. Like a flash a crowd collected; but Fatty worked on over the unconscious form. The crowd talked and jostled. At his elbow a voice said: "Let me help!" Fatty glanced up at a good looking boy about his own age, who gave the Scout salute and said:

"Anybody called an ambulance?"

"Don't know," said Fatty. "I had to stop that blood."

The boy stood up and pointed to the grocer boy who stood whip in hand. "Get an ambulance here," he ordered.

"Yes, get an ambulance," cried a dozen.

A policeman hurried up, and a doctor came out of a nearby house. "The boy is dying," he said, after a hurried examination. "He must be gotten to a hospital. Where is an ambulance?"

At that moment the grocer's young man bustled back.

"You forgot to say what hospital you wanted to take him to," he said.

"Why, you idiot!" cried Fatty. "Didn't you telephone? Doctor, why can't we use my car?"

The doctor glanced at the large automobile.

"Just the thing! But take this officer with you and drive your best. I will go too. It is a ride for life — the boy is certainly dying."

They lifted the unconscious form upon the broad tonneau seat where the physician knelt and steadied it. Tony cranked the car. He leaped in while the policeman sat beside him, and the strange Scout clung like wax on the step at the other side, his hand upon the horn.

"Every second counts!" cried the doctor.

"Let her go then!" said the policeman grimly, and the big car shot from the curb and went humming into her best pace. Tony set a straight

course. The constant honk of the horn, the policeman with lifted hand, the terrific speed won them the right of way. They took the last hill with the smooth swiftness of a bird. Will slowed gently up to the curb and leaped out after the policeman. The Scout was already at the hospital door. White-coated attendants hurried out with a stretcher and took the boy into the building.

For the first time Fatty looked at the doctor. "Will he die, doctor?" he asked.

"I do not know," he replied. "If he lives — who bandaged that wrist?"

"I did," said Fatty, modestly.

"Did you fix his head up, too?"

"Yes," said Fatty.

"Well," said the doctor, "how on earth does a boy of your size and age — you can't be over fifteen or sixteen years of age — how does a boy of that age happen to know all about surgical dressings?"

"Why, I'm a Boy Scout," said Tony. "This boy helped. He's a Scout."

"Well, boys," said the doctor, "I *think* you've saved a life today, and your organization ought to be very proud of you. Call and see me, will you? I have two sons who ought to join the Scouts."

He gave Fatty a card and hurried toward the hospital.

"Shall I take you back, sir?" called Will.

"No; I'll send for my own car later, thank



you," said the doctor, and hurried into the building, just as a policeman came out.

The officer walked up to Fatty.

"It's a nice day's work, I dunno," he remarked. "A kilt bye, and the divil knows who done it, and you speedin' t'roo the main streets holdin' up traffic just scandalous, and jim av the whole collection—here do be Officer O'Rourke aff his beat, *aff his beat*, an' him wid two marks against him alriddy. 'Tis a fine day's job."

"Well, get in and we'll hustle back," said Fatty. "I want to wash my hands. I'm all sticky. I guess the poor kid will die all right, but we can't help him here. My mother is waiting for me. Get in, Scout," he said to the strange lad who still lingered.

"I'm thinkin'," said the officer, with a grave face but a twinkle in his merry blue eyes, "that you are at this moment arristed for speedin'! And I'll be takin' ye up to the Polees station."

Fatty laughed.

"'Tis no joke," said O'Rourke. "'Tis there we do be goin'."

"Why, you old loon," cried Fatty, "what's eatin' you? You can't arrest me for saving life. Besides, you were along—go on back on your beat and shut up about it."

"No," said the policeman, "me mind is made: and the O'Rourkes niver change. To the stàtion ye go! Will it be peaceable wid both of ye or will

I use force? Besides, did I not like your looks, I'd say ye was impident to an officer, and I'd jug ye for that same, extra."

"Well, I tell you," said the exasperated boy, "my mother is waiting for me, and I'm going to see her first."

"All fine," said Mr. O'Rourke. "'Tis mesilf will explain your badness while you hould the auttymobile from doin' any further damage."

Arriving at the Alhambra, the officer insisted upon going in to see Mrs. Ransier while Fatty waited in the car with the strange Scout.

"Now what ails that pinhead of a policeman?" Fatty inquired.

"He's all right," said the boy. "He is not really arresting us, but he wants us to go with him and report the affair. Did you see who ran the kid down?"

"I couldn't see the people," said Will, "but you bet I took the number, wrote it down, too. Gee, it was a rotten trick! Those men ought to be electrocuted if that boy is dead. He was on his own side of the street and they swerved over on his side. It was plain murder. Of course they honked, but how could that help?"

"It's fierce!" said the new boy.

The officer came out smiling. "'Tis a lovely lady entirely that your mother is," he declared. "I was sorry I was to explain her boy's misdeeds. She seems to belave in ye like."

Fatty grinned and started for the Court House, stopping at the side door where the Chief of Police was to be found.

The two boys entered with the officer, who motioned them to a couple of seats against the wall, while he talked to the Captain.

"This makes me sick," said Fatty. "What a silly row about nothing!"

"All they want is to hear about the accident and all that," said the new boy. "I'm in here often. My father teaches in the Police Gymnasium."

"Teaches?" said Fatty. "Is he a Physical Instructor?"

"He teaches boxing," said the boy. "I'm Kid O'Connors' son."

"The Lightweight!" exclaimed Fatty, staring at O'Connors. "What do you know about that? Kid O'Connors' boy! Why, I never knew he had a boy!"

"Well, he has," said O'Connors, smiling, "and I can fight, too; but my father won't allow me to become a prize fighter."

"Gee, I'd think he'd be crazy to have you," said Fatty, enviously. "Why, he's the Champion Lightweight. I never saw him but I've read about all his matches."

"No," said O'Connors, "he thinks I can do something better with myself. He says there is nothing to it at all. You are down and out for

good and all if you get beaten, and you are sure to go stale or get out of condition somehow and get your knockout. Then you are just a has-been; doing a stunt on a vaudeville stage, and after that tending bar somewhere.

"He's right, all right," continued O'Connors. "I don't want you to think my father is like that, for he isn't. He's straight and clean; and he thinks boxing is an art. Why, you could not get him to booze or smoke. My father is a *man*, if he is a prize fighter. I hope I can be as good and straight as he is."

"That's it," said Fatty. "I should think he would like to have you go in and elevate the profession."

"No," said O'Connors. "You *can't* elevate it, my father says. One fellow will be straight, and a lot of the others will be so rotten that there is no show for straight work. You'll laugh when I tell you, it does seem funny for a prize fighter's kid, but I'm going to be a doctor."

"Good work!" said Fatty, who was, however, rather disappointed in the aims of his new friend.

"Well, it's like this: I've had the uses and abuses and the care of the human body dinned into me ever since I can remember, and if I can't use my knowledge to fight with, I'm going to put more learning of the right sort with it and fight diseases.

"Jiminy Christmas, how I hate sickness—and dirt, too. Say, did you ever see anything



prettier than *skin* when it's clean? It's great!"

"Well, you are a good one!" said Fatty.  
"What do they call you?"

"Fellows call me Chuck," said the boy.  
"What's your name?"

"William and then some Ransier," said the owner of the name; "but all the boys call me Fatty because I'm so thin. Gee, it makes me mad! I'd like a little meat here and there just for a sample."

"You need some sort of exercises, maybe," said Chuck. "We'll ask father. The Captain wants us now."

They went to the Captain's desk and stood at attention.

"Did you get that number?" the officer asked.

"Yes, sir," said Fatty.

"A raysourceful mind," murmured O'Rourke.  
"Your papa will be that plazed."

"You saw it all, did you?" continued the Captain. "Tell me the whole thing."

Fatty proceeded to give a clear account of the affair while the Police Captain frowned and tapped the desk with his pencil.

When Fatty ended he said:

"Well, my boy, you may have saved a life to-day, and your promptness in noting that car number may put us on track of the brutes. This sort of thing is occurring too often. If those fellows were not using a fake number we will catch them

and they may have a charge of murder against them. I wish we had another witness. Well, that's all today, Ransier. What are you going to do now? "

" Go and wash my hands," said Fatty, smiling.

" Go into the gymnasium," said the Captain.

" O'Connors, you know the way."

" Yes, sir," said the boy; and bidding the Captain good-bye, they crossed the big, bare room, went down a short corridor and entered the gymnasium.

For a moment Fatty looked about him in delight; then his gaze was centered on a pair in the boxing ring near them.

A soft, fat, bandy-legged youth in tights was hopping heavily around Kid O'Connors, answering his commands with the weak, haphazard thrusts with a pair of fat, red arms, upon which the flesh shook like jelly.

Fatty smothered a roar of laughter and seized Chuck by the arm.

" Oh, mamma, mamma," he whispered, " isn't that just *lovely*? Why, it's the Carroll kid! "

## CHAPTER II

### SAVED BY A HAIR

“ Yes, that’s Carroll; Mr. Clement Carroll,” said Chuck. “ Isn’t he a mess? Where did you see him? ”

“ He lives where I do,” said Fatty. “ Gee,” he added, at once forgetting the fat lad lumbering about, “ Gee, is that your father? Isn’t he a peach? I’d like to know him! ”

Into Fatty’s active brain flashed a picture of himself going back to Lafayette, and saying in a careless way, “ I was talking to Kid O’Connors the other day.” How the fellows would rave!

“ That’s easy,” said Chuck. He liked Fatty and he told himself that he was the real thing.

Chuck piloted Fatty into the clean, big lavatory where a dozen shower baths invited cleanliness on the part of the force.

When Fatty had finished scrubbing his hands, the boys came out and met Kid O’Connors, who had just ended the lesson with the panting Carroll.

“ Father,” said Chuck, “ I want to make you acquainted with Will Ransier. We did a little Scout work together this morning. At least he did it, and I tagged along.”

“ Nothing of the sort, Mr. O’Connors!” said Fatty awkwardly.

Kid O'Connors, with a boyish smile, extended his hand, still warm from the padded glove, and grasped Fatty's lean fist in what was meant for a friendly grip.

Fatty bore it like a hero in silence; but his heart turned over and his bones cracked. He heard the Kid say in a gentle, low voice:

"Proper pleased to meet you, Mr. Ransier," and then he found that his hand was still alive. He put it carelessly behind him and wagged it feebly. He guessed he would not put this in when he told the boys in Lafayette. They wouldn't be interested.

Chuck began to give his father an account of the affair of the morning and Fatty stood watching the perfect body before him. The Kid stood with his arms folded, hugging himself like a boy. His skin was as smooth and fair and shining as pink marble. There were no ugly lumpy muscles; just a beautiful ripple under the silky skin when he changed position. He was light on his feet as a deer; and quicker than a cat when he moved. His deep-set, brown eyes were keen and sharp, yet kindly; his short, black hair covered a well-shaped head; but he bore one disfiguring mark of his trade, a "tin ear" puffy and out of shape.

"That was a good day's work, and I'm glad Charlie was there to help a bit. Hope we'll see somethin' of you. Come in any time. Do you box?"



"No, I do not," said Fatty, sadly. "There is **not** enough of me to stand up before a fellow. It wouldn't be fair. I'm so thin he couldn't hit me."

The Kid laughed.

"You *are* thin; too thin. Are you well?"

"Tough as a nut," Fatty assured him.

"Well, I jolly well know there's some way to broaden you," said the Kid. "We might experiment with him a bit, Charlie. Do you eat much?"

"Yes, a good deal," Fatty assured him; then he stood staring at Charlie. "Say," he demanded suddenly, "when did *you* eat last?"

"Not since breakfast," said Charlie with a grin. "I forgot all about it."

"So did I," said Fatty. "And if I get any thinner, I won't be here at all. Come on with me and let's eat. Will you come, Mr. O'Connors?"

"No, thank you," said the boxer, smiling his gentle smile. "I had my proper dinner at noon."

He said good-bye to the boys and did not offer to shake hands with Fatty, a fact that relieved that young man.

The boys walked quickly up the street.

"Say," said Fatty, "I believe that is the first time in my life that I ever forgot to eat. What will we do; go to a regular feed joint or a Baltimore?"

"Baltimore," said Charlie promptly. "They are so clean."

The boys went into the first Baltimore lunch that they came to, and while they ate two chicken pot pies apiece,— to say nothing of rolls and milk and custard pie and baked apples (they agreed that it was too near dinner time to eat much) — they talked over the events of the day.

After their meal the boys walked back to the Court House where they parted, Charlie going in to wait for his father, and Fatty driving the big car back to the apartment where he gave Peters a tip, and spent the rest of the afternoon on the divan beside his mother telling her about it.

“ Gosh, Mumsy, he was so limp and bloody. I hated to touch him, but Chuck waded right in.”

“ How awful! ” cried Mrs. Ransier, shaking her curly head. A twinkle came into her eyes. “ Will, dear, suppose it had been a girl! ”

“ Girl! ” cried Fatty, horrified as he thought of his handling of the unconscious boy. “ Girl! What puts such *awful* things into your head? Why, if it had been a girl, I’d have yelled for you. Of course I wouldn’t have touched her.”

Mrs. Ransier laughed. “ My dear, I wish you had a sister,” she said. “ It is a great shame to have you so afraid of girls.”

“ I’m not *afraid* of ’em! ” cried Fatty. “ I just don’t like ’em; they get my goat every time. If they would *ever* stop their crazy giggling; and they wiggle so; and they walk so awkward and wobbly on those high heels. I’ll bet my life you

were never like that. Girls must have changed."

Mrs. Ransier laughed and tickled Fatty's nose with her fluffy hair. Fatty laughed too.

"Mums, you are such a peach," he said.

"Will," said Mrs. Ransier, "what if a girl did that?"

Fatty bounced off the divan. He glared.

"Did that," he growled, "*did that?* Well, *I'll* tell you what I'd do. I'd just walk off so quick she couldn't see me for the dust. Honest, mother, I don't see what puts such crazy ideas into your head."

Mrs. Ransier still laughed. "Never mind, dearest," she said, "I'll not let anyone get you. Now go telephone Mrs. Keene and ask if we shall come out there to-morrow."

Mrs. Keene was delighted to have them come, and Sunday afternoon they made the eight-mile run to Lafayette, and Mrs. Keene and Mrs. Ransier planned for the new apartment in town, and Mr. Ransier went down and had a long talk with Mr. Smith, during which Fred's ear must have burned, because his name was so often spoken. At the close of the confab Mr. Ransier handed Mr. Smith a check, filled out nice and fat, and Mr. Smith put it in his pocket rather reluctantly, and said, "Well, my boy, if you want to do this, all right, but you are not called upon to."

And Mr. Ransier said, "That's all right, Mr. Smith. She will take it from you and if we can

save that fine boy, what does it matter who does it? I'm mighty proud to be allowed to help."

In the Keene barn about twenty of the Lafayette Scouts were gathered.

Fatty and Tony and Foxy Peck sat in a row on the feed box and Spider Morrison filled the wheelbarrow while Geezer Reed sat all over the peck measure. The other boys sat on the floor and on boxes or leaned against the wall.

Fatty told them about the accident, and led up quite easily to meeting Kid O'Connors.

"Fat wath alwayth the lucky one," sighed Spider. "He wath born tho."

"Perhaps I was; but I wasn't born hungry, anyhow," declared Fatty. "What you eatin', Spider?"

"Nuthin' but an athparagus tip," said Spider.

"That's so," said Slinky Mott. "He eats 'em right out of the garden raw."

"Thath's all right," said Spider. "It dosth to path away the time."

"Well, boys," continued Fatty, "you'd ought to see Kid O'Connors close up the way I did. Say, he's a lollypalluza! He's got the best shoulders you ever squinted at, and a hide like a baby."

Spider giggled. "Hide ith good," he remarked to the asparagus stalk.

"Well, epidermis, then, you old goat! Guess I know; he's a peach and you want to see him. And there's that boy of his—he's a peach,



too; but to think of all the advantages he's got, and he's going to be a *doctor*. Isn't that the limit? "

"It thertainly ith," agreed Spider, whose father was a physician with a country practice which took him for thirty and forty-mile drives over hopeless roads. "But we can't *all* be prithe fighters."

"You don't want to call it that to Chuck," warned Fatty. "I noticed that he always speaks of it as 'boxing.' "

"Well, you fellows all want to come out. I'll fix it somehow so you can see him. I tell you, he's the real article. It's getting late—I've got to get my folks and start."

The boys howled at Fatty's air of importance, and yelled good-bye as the automobile slid down the hill and out of sight.

Two days later O'Rourke appeared at the Rancier apartment.

"Special jooty I'm on, lady," he said, bowing to the pretty woman who greeted him. "'Tis your son I'm after on a charrge of 'sault and battry. 'Tis himself do be thumpin' me on the back whin we meet and infringin' on the dignity, an' me office. To be tellin' the truth, which is not so plisant, 'tis the poor little lad at the hospital we do be goin' to see—Mister Will an' me. He's sinsible; but he do be dyin', may God keep his sowl. They are goin' to have him tell what he

knows about the accident, more's the pity. Mesilf, I'd lit him pass in peace, but 'tis the law, and they've got the brutes what done it, houldin' them without bail in two nate, clane cells wid no rugs to skuff up. So we're aff up there to see him on his bed o' pain; and 'tis no plisant job. I'd like to clane out a Wells street saloon on election eve best like; but no matter."

"Oh, I'm *so* sorry," cried little Mrs. Ransier. "Could I help, do you think? Where is his mother?"

"None," said O'Rourke. "Come, then, why don't ye, swate lady? Belike 'twill soothe his passin' do you but hold his lonesome little hand."

"Call the automobile, Will," cried Mrs. Ransier, hurrying to get her cloak and veil.

On their way to the hospital, O'Rourke gave Mrs. Ransier a history of the dying child. His only relation was an uncle whose coarse, scolding wife resented the care of a child which did not belong to her. He earned good wages, however, as messenger boy, so was allowed to stay in the house. But life, according to tender-hearted O'Rourke, was but a hard thing to the frail boy. Now he was dying.

"Perhaps better so," said the policeman huskily; "but I wish now I'd bespoke him more kindly once and again."

The little fellow was a very pitiful sight. He had lapsed again into unconsciousness and the

lawyer, sitting at the foot of the high, narrow cot, held his pen in readiness if he should respond to the restoratives.

Slipping out of her coat, Mrs. Ransier approached. The nurse was stooping to administer a hypodermic. "There!" she said. "It seems a shame to trouble him — he won't rally."

"He may," said the doctor. "He simply makes no effort to rally."

The boy's eyes opened slowly and fixed themselves upon Mrs. Ransier. "John," said the doctor, "tell me how you got hurt."

The lad struggled to speak, then without a sound closed his eyes.

"No use," said the doctor. "He hasn't the strength or will to talk, and we can't give it to him. They'll have to settle the case without him."

"I think he will live," said Mrs. Ransier suddenly. "Will you let me try, please? I can do no harm."

"No, you cannot hurt him," said the doctor. "What will you do?"

"Mother him," said little Mrs. Ransier, fiercely. She flung her pretty hat away from her. It hit the lawyer and he held it respectfully in one hand while he watched the lovely face bend tenderly above the pillow.

"John," she said, "John, dear!" Again the eyes opened and gazed deep into hers.

"When did I die?" asked the boy slowly.

"You are alive," said Mrs. Ransier, softly kneeling by the bed and slipping an arm beneath his head. There was a long silence. Mrs. Ransier closely held his hands.

"Aren't you an angel?" he asked, finally.

"No, dear," she breathed.

"I *must* be dead," he persisted. "No one on earth loves me like this, and I'm so cold."

The nurse slipped away and returned with several hot water bottles which she put about him, and a hot drink which he took from Mrs. Ransier's hand, swallowing it painfully.

"Tell us how you got hurt, John," persisted the doctor.

"No," said Mrs. Ransier, "John doesn't feel like talking now."

"I'd like to talk to you," said the boy, wistfully. "If you are *not* an angel, I might die and then I'd never see you any more. Your arm feels so good under my head."

"Yes, dear. I won't take it away. I'll just hold you tight and you are going to get well."

There was a long silence. The room was very still. Bead by bead a rosary slipped through the big, trembling hands of Policeman O'Rourke as he said his prayers, with all the warmth of his simple soul, for the child upon the bed and the beautiful woman beside it.

The nurse stepped noiselessly here and there. The doctor kept a light, practiced finger upon the



fluttering pulse. Fatty, face to face for the first time with death, felt his heart beat thickly and his mouth go dry. The hat in the lawyer's left hand grew heavier and heavier, but he did not dare to put it down. Again the heavy eyes opened and looked long at Mrs. Ransier. She held him. "John, you must live," she said softly — "you must live: you *must live*."

"I'm so tired, and I hurt so," the boy replied.

"You will get well and you shall go into the beautiful country to rest," she promised him. "There is a hammock under the trees, and you shall live there until you are so strong that you will want to jump and run and play about. And there are dogs out there, John, big, beautiful dogs that like boys and want to romp with them. And there is a soft bed for you at night."

The boy listened. She seemed to be dreaming him back to earth.

"How will I get money to pay my board?" he asked feebly.

"Oh, you won't need to pay board," she assured him. "You are going to a house that belongs to me. My sister lives there, and she needs a boy to take care of her because her boy died long ago, and she is very lonely."

"Is she like you?" asked the boy.

"Yes," said the soft voice, "only nicer. You will love her. And I need you dreadfully too, because those are my dogs, and now there is no one

to play with them. There are ever so many nice boys there, too; and you will have such good times together. Just think: all those dogs, and the hammock under the trees, and the country and the green grass. You must live, John. Will you try? John, will you try for me? "

" I do hurt so," came the feeble voice.

" I know," she said, " but you are so brave. You will stand the hurt, will you not? You will try, won't you, John? "

There was another long, long pause.

The nurse left the room.

Again the boy opened his eyes and looked long at Mrs. Ransier.

" Yes, I'll try," he said, sighing. " But I am awful, awful tired. I think I would go to sleep if — do you think — would you mind — " He was afraid to say it. But people close to death, even poor little messenger boys dare greatly — " I want you to kiss me," he whispered.

She bent her bright head and kissed his pale, childish lips.

" Go to sleep, dear," she said, " I will not go away."

His eyes closed. The room was silent. In O'Rourke's big hands the beads still dropped one by one. Two big tears coursed down his weather-beaten cheeks. His eyes rested upon Mrs. Ransier as upon a saint. The lawyer, rising, tiptoed from the room, still holding the pretty hat. The boy

slept peacefully, and the doctor, releasing the thin wrist, presently went around and gently lifted the boy so that Mrs. Ransier could arise. Beckoning her to follow, he stepped into the hall. She went noiselessly, followed by Fatty and O'Rourke.

The doctor took her hand.

"Dear lady," he said, "the child's life is yours; for you have saved him."

"I am so glad, so glad," she said simply, and turned to Fatty. He put his arms about her. He could never tell her how he adored her.

"My own, own mother!" he whispered, and kissing her, turned and followed O'Rourke while Mrs. Ransier returned to the sick boy.

When Fatty and the policeman reached the sidewalk, O'Rourke shoved the beads he still held into his pocket, stepped up to Fatty and deliberately *shook* him.

"Belave me," he said when that was done, "whativer manner av a sort ye are, ye are no fit son for such as her. An' ye can smoke that, for 'tis truth I'm tellin'."

"You don't have to shake me," said Fatty savagely. "I guess I know it myself."

"Then 'tis well ye know it," said O'Rourke. "'Twill save me much care an' trouble teachin' ye, for 'tis the wan thing in life that I feel ye should know."

## CHAPTER III

### THE CARROLLS COME IN

For a week, Mrs. Ransier spent most of her time at the hospital. Slowly and surely she drew John back from death. Just *mothered* him back the doctors and nurses said.

Mr. Ransier and Fatty, left largely to their own devices, found what an awful botch life was without their little, laughing lady. Mr. Ransier clung to Fatty and they had long walks and talks together. Fatty took his father to the Police Gymnasium, where he met Kid O'Connors, and not only arranged to have Fatty take boxing lessons, but commenced taking them himself. "In self-defense," he said. "For fear I might have to lick Will."

To Fatty's delight, Mr. Ransier liked Kid O'Connors, and took a great fancy to his son, whom he declared to be a fine fellow. He never tired of seeing the two soft, pink, fat Carrolls take their boxing lessons. Fatty, however, was afraid of apoplexy. His father had such serious snorting, choking times, hiding his amusement. The Carrolls were too conceited and took themselves too seriously to dream that anything that they would do could be funny, and pranced and



lunged and slapped in the direction of their teacher, but never coming within a foot of him. Once in a while he smacked them smartly, and they strutted around feeling that that indeed was a real boxing match.

They invited Fatty to have a go but he said that he was only allowed to box with his teacher.

Charlie never dared put on the gloves with either one. He said he knew that he'd hurt him. So the two Carrolls, talking it over, decided that everybody was afraid of them and called to each other's notice how seldom the Kid landed on either little, pink nose or round chin.

"We have too much science for him," declared Clement. "Did you notice the other day, DeForest, when he came at me with a left hander, how I stopped him with my right and jolted him on the jaw with my left? Then I danced back and left him when he tried to return."

"It was great," said DeForest proudly. "I did some nice clean work the other day, too, when I backed him into the ropes. He can't get used to my rushes!" and DeForest gazed proudly at the beautifully creased trousers enclosing the wonderful legs that did such great work.

At home, Kid O'Connors would declare with a groan that the Carroll money was the hardest that he earned. "I would like to just *pat* them all I wanted for five minutes. Not to hurt them, but just show them what real quick work is."

"Oh, *go on*, father, do it," urged Charlie. "I think you ought to; they are so conceited. Honest, it would do them good! Do it, and wait until Fatty and I are there. Oh, it will be a circus!"

"Why, Charlie! I never saw you wish your father to do a mean thing before," objected Mrs. O'Connors. "It's not like you."

"Well, mamma," said Charlie, "you don't know the Carrolls: if you did you would think I was wishing them mighty good luck. They are a pair of *fools*. You know, father, they don't know that Will has any money, and as a result, they have no use for him. They suspected when the big automobile came, but Will told them he was running it for a relative. It does belong to a relative: Will's father. Why, you know how high-headed they are at the gym. Just you wait! Some day I'm going to tell them that the Ransiers have so much money that they eat off gold plates: and then you watch the fun!"

Before Charlie could get the chance that he was waiting for, Tony came to the city and Charlie was duly introduced. The boys took to each other and the three planned many a good time for the summer. One day Fatty, fishing in his pocket, drew out a crumpled card. "That's the card that doctor gave me the day John was hurt. Tony, I never noticed his name; it's Carroll," he said.

"Why, yes: he's Clement's and DeForest's father. Didn't you know?"

"Great Scott, he *can't* be!" exclaimed Fatty. "He's never with them."

"Well, I don't think that is queer," said Charlie. "See the way it is, Mrs. Carroll is an awful swell, and the boys take after her, and Dr. Carroll is just a plain, smart doctor. I guess they discourage the doctor a good deal. He wants them to be Boy Scouts. Don't you remember what he said that day?"

"Gee, they would be ornamental all right," said Fatty.

"Would they like to come in?"

"Ask them and see," advised Chuck: and Fatty, who was always in earnest, did so the next time they met.

"Certainly *not!*" said Clement and DeForest in one breath. "Very common sort of an organization! Such a mixed class in it. You have all sorts, really!"

Fatty turned red.

"No, not all sorts," he said. "There are no fools or idiots," and walked off.

"Funny remark," said Clement to DeForest. Clement always spoke first. He had less nose, less chin and was redder and fatter than his brother.

"Deuced funny!" agreed DeForest. "But I don't think that he is particularly bright. I don't think he caught the idea at all when we spoke of it as being very mixed."

"Probably not," said Clement.

It was a day or two later when Charlie found his chance. He was at the gym watching his father grimly nurse DeForest along through the lesson. Strange to say, Clement came out in a gorgeous bathrobe and sat beside him.

"When have you seen Ransier?" asked Charlie.

"Really I don't know," said Clement in a bored tone. "You see we do not know the same people at all. I *never* meet him socially. He is a great friend of yours, is he not?"

"You bet he is!" said Charlie. "Funny how queer he is about money!"

"How's that?" said Clement. "Sensitive about not having much, I suppose—poor fellow!"

"Not quite," said Charlie. "The fact is, his father has so much money that they simply don't know how to spend it. They own half the oil wells in Virginia. Mr. Ransier has just ordered two new automobiles, an electric for Mrs. Ransier, and a big runabout for Will. Will has twice as much money given him as he can spend; and I never saw anyone so generous, but he'll never forgive you if you speak of money to him. He's awful funny about it."

Clement's round, red mouth hung open.

"For gracious goodness' sake!" he remarked.

"Sure thing!" said Charlie. "Now he likes you and DeForest like the deuce, but if he thought



you liked him for his money, he'd never speak to you. They are real swells, too,—they have a coat-of-arms as big as a platter."

"Goodness, gracious me!" said Clement. He shut his round, red mouth. "DeForest is through," he said. "I'll go help him dress," and hurried off.

One day, a week later, Fatty hurried into the gym with his eyes nearly as round as the Carrolls'. He looked anxiously behind him, then hurried over where Chuck and Tony were watching a practice bout.

Fatty threw himself down with a force that made the bench crack.

"Say, did you hear that, fellows? Gee, I'm getting hefty, I tell you! Didn't know I could break the furniture!"

"You seem in a big hurry," said Tony. "'Fraid we'd get away?"

"No," said Fatty, frowning. "Fact is, boys, I'm worried. I don't know what's the matter: but it's straight goods that if I had a nice, juicy bone in my pocket, those two little Carroll pups couldn't stick tighter to my heels than they have lately. It's *awful*! They lay for me outside school, and in the elevator—even Peters notices it. Peters says, 'You're growing popular, sir.'

"Well, I certainly am if that's what you call having those two snips stick to me day and night. They have been to call on mother, and *she* got in

wrong, I guess, by patting Clement on the back. Mother's got some sort of a rinkydoo on the wall that tells how some of our folks came out of the ark or some such foolishness, and DeForest sat and stared at it all the time he was there. Why, he acted kind of *dippy* over it! When he got up to go, he edged over and read the motto two or three times. I saw his lips go. I'll bet he was memorizing it so that he could get someone to translate it. Why, I'm nearly crazy! I'll bust if this keeps up!

"And as for Clement, I *wish* you could have heard him talk to mother about the Simple Life. He drooled on about it like a copy-book, and finally mother said: 'My dear child, there is no such thing as the Simple Life. The more you try to make it simple, the harder you have to work.'

"I thought that ought to hold him, but Clement says just as cool as ice, 'Really, I can't agree with you, Mrs. Ransier; but one never argues with a lady.'

"I was crazy to punch him, but mother looked so amused that I thought he'd might as well live along if she got any fun out of it. 'Won't argue with a lady,' says Clement; and him sixteen years old! I'd like to spank him. Oh, Jiminy, here they come now! "

The two Carrolls hurried in, cast anxious eyes about, and with a look of relief on their round faces, crossed the room.

"Sorry we missed you, old chap," said Clement. He sat down close to Fatty.

"Yes, we thought we could all come over together," added DeForest, squeezing in between Fatty and Tony. Both boys paid no attention whatever to Tony or Charlie. Fatty stretched out his long legs, leaned his head back against the wall and groaned.

"You do flatter me so," he remarked. "'Tis almost too much for me!"

The Carrolls looked at each other, and went off into cackling laughter. "Good work, old man!" they both exclaimed, patting Fatty on the back.

"Now what?" demanded Fatty. "If I don't choose to go around like a comet dragging a fuzzy little tail, what's the joke?"

The Carrolls continued to cackle. Tony looked surprised. Charlie hid his face in his hands and laughed until he cried. His joke had worked beautifully. He had to share it.

"Come along, Tone," he said, and walked away.

"Come back, you pikers," cried Fatty for he was so hemmed in by his admirers that he could not move.

"In a minute," said Charlie, and, drawing Tony into the lavatory, told him the joke.

"Oh, it's too funny for words," gasped Tony, when he could speak. "Let's keep it up for a while. I want to go back and listen."

They hastily retraced their steps. Fatty's eyes were full of murder. His thin arms were folded tightly and he had made himself as small as possible.

On either side, the Carrolls turned toward him, their round, pink faces full of admiration. Before them, with a puzzled look in his blue eyes, stood O'Rourke. He put an arm around Chuck and Tony, and said:

"Belave me, boys, I'd go far and fare worse to look at such a swate sight. 'Tis the t'ree of 'em now settin' there friendly and close as birds on a bough; and me friend Mr. Ransier looks that plazed!"

"Certainly!" said Clement. "We three fellows are congenial, O'Rourke."

"True fer ye," said O'Rourke solemnly, "as conjaneyul and frindly as St. Pathrick and the snakes. 'Tis fine to see yez!"

"Aw, rats!" said Fatty, giving a jerk and breaking away from the two fat boys. "Come on out of this!"

"Yes," said Clement. "Come on! This is no place to chat."

He jumped up as quickly as possible, and took Fatty's arm. Fatty turned imploring eyes upon the policeman.

"Say, Mr. O'Rourke," he begged, "arrest me, will you? I'm not safe to have around."

"I can see that," said the officer, "and fer yer



mother's sake I'll take you in and put a straight jacket on yez before ye do harm to the hilpless. What ye've done to so punish yersilf, I dunno; but I'll look into it. Come alang, then."

He laid a hand on Fatty's shoulder and with a great show of force walked off with him.

Chuck turned to the Carrolls. "Are you going to box now?" he said.

Clement stared at him. "Oh, are you two here?" he remarked.

For a moment Charlie stood still, pale and furious. Then he controlled himself, and without a word walked away.

"Gee whiz, kid, why didn't you soak him for that?" groaned Tony.

"He's not worth it," gritted Chuck: "but he's earned all that's coming to him now. I'll fix him, the measly mucker! Let's find Will. I'm going to put him on!"

Will was marching up and down outside the Court House, with O'Rourke. The boys dashed up.

"Say, Fatty, you've got to help out," Tony exploded, and both talking, he and Charlie told the whole joke.

"Well, fellows," said Fatty, "you are sure two Scout pills. You ought to have your faces pushed in for this, but never mind. Let's begin any old time, and see the fun."

He started back toward the gym. "Let 'em

alone now, Fat," counselled Tony. "They are getting ready to box."

"Certainly!" said Fatty. "I'm going in to admire them."

The boys followed him. Fatty sat in the seat nearest the ring, and with open mouth and round eyes watched the boxing. He kept up a fire of remarks, in a low tone, but carefully intended for the ears of the Carrolls.

"Do you know," he confided to the boys, "I never noticed the form those fellows have until today? Gee, they've got a swell build, too!"

The Carrolls, listening, pranced and parried, and whacked each other with short, baby blows. When they finally finished, they left the ring for the shower room, more out of breath and self-satisfied than ever. The boys watched for them, and when the Carrolls came out, the three were busy talking about Boy Scout affairs.

The Carrolls joined them, or joined Fatty, rather, as they seemed to consider the other two quite beneath their notice.

"Well, old chap," said Clement, "how was that for a swift round?"

"Where are the Lafayette Scouts going this summer?" said Fatty, paying no attention.

"Way down in Maine," said Tony. "Some of Mr. Smith's planning, of course."

"Who is this Smith you talk about?" interrupted DeForest.

"I talk about *Mister* Smith," said Fatty, coldly. "*Mister* Smith is the dandiest old gentleman on this earth, and you bet it's an honor to know him."

"Mr. Brown comes next," said Tony.

"You bet!" said Fatty. "Let's go out tomorrow and see 'em. Can't you go, Chuck?"

"Certainly, we will go," said both the Carrolls.

Fatty looked at them. "There will not be room for you," he said, coldly. "Besides, we are all Scouts, and you wouldn't enjoy it."

"That's the thing I had in my mind to speak about," said Clement cheerfully, overlooking Fatty's remark. "The *pater* thinks we ought to join the Scouts."

"It's pretty mixed, you know," said Chuck.

"Yes, of course," said DeForest, "but the *pater* thinks it would be a good thing for fellows of our standing, you know, Will, to join and sort of — er — elevate it, you know."

"Did Doctor Carroll say that?" sternly demanded Charlie.

"Well, to that effect," DeForest lied.

"What is the *pater*? Is that a name for your father?" asked Tony, innocently. Tony was the best Latin grind in school, the fellows said.

Clement and DeForest smiled. "It is Latin for *father*," they explained kindly. "All the fellows in our class call their fathers that."

"Well, if your '*pater*' wants you to elevate the

Scouts, I suppose it must be done," said Fatty. "Do you know anything about it?"

"Why, we know that you drill and go camping," said DeForest. "I sounds jolly enough."

"Oh, yes, it's jolly all right," Fatty assured him, "but look here! Here's the smallest thing: every morning you tie a knot in your tie, and you can't untie it until you do some act of kindness."

"Why should one untie one's tie at all?" asked Clement. "DeForest and I can tie the best looking four-in-hands in town. An English lord's servant taught us. We'll teach you if you like, Will."

Will sighed. He tapped one finger on his palm.

"You don't tie four-in-hands, children. You tie just a common, ordinary knot like *THIS* in the *END* of your tie, and you wear it dangling outside your vest like *THIS* until you have earned the right to take it out. And you earn the right to take it out by doing some act of kindness or courtesy. Do I make myself clear?"

"But, by Jove, man," objected Clement, "that's bound to wrinkle up your tie!"

Fatty looked at him a long time and sighed:

"Yes, it *will* wrinkle up your tie," he admitted.

"Now, as this is a primer class, I will tell you some more. You will have to cut out your cussing unless you want a dose of cold water down your sleeve. You will have to learn something about your country's flag, which I bet you don't know



now. You've got to tie a reef, a short bend, a close hitch and a bowline knot. You have got to swear to do these things: First, to do your duty to God and your country. Second, to help other people at all times."

Clement interrupted, "Why, that will be a bally nuisance! One's time is too valuable to spend helping other people!"

"I suppose yours is," agreed Fatty grimly, "but I thought I ought to mention that part of the oath. Then third is to obey the Scout law."

"There is one other thing," suggested Tony. "You must earn all your own equipment."

"Why not ask the *pater* for it?" said Clement. "He'd give it to us cheerfully."

"Nothing doing!" said Fatty. "You've got to prove that you have earned it, too."

"By Jove!" said DeForest feebly. "We have never had to earn any money. Darned if I'd know what to do!"

Fatty was enjoying himself. "Well, you must know how to do *something*," he said.

DeForest's mouth, which had been hanging open, closed, then opened again.

"I can paint on china," he said.

"Good work!" said Fatty heartily, but with a twinkle in his eyes. He turned to the other boy. "Now, Clement," he said, "I'll bet you can embroider!"

## CHAPTER IV

### THE BASEMENT ROOM

"That was a masterly move," said Fatty a little later, as they lost the Carrolls at the soda fountain in a drug store, and walked home together. "Gee, fellows, I'm beginning to think that those dubs are really worth the trouble. It's a cinch that I never wanted to laugh as I did just now. Too bad Clement can't embroider! He could put his little bureau covers and tidies in a suit-case and sell 'em the way the Armenians do. Well, I say we *do* something! We've wasted the whole day. Let's go up to the house first and see if mother has some cake."

In the elevator Fatty said: "Hello, Peters, good afternoon!"

Peters, a little, thin wisp of a man, merely snarled. He was pale and his hands trembled.

"*Ain't* he the limit?" asked Fatty, as they waited for the door to be opened.

"I tell you, Fat, the man is sick or in trouble," declared tender-hearted Tony.

"Aw, sick nuthin'!" sneered Fatty. "He's a sore head, that's all! I tell you I believe he's a miser besides. He gets more tips, and he looks like a rag-bag. Don't think there is any Mrs.

Peters. He has a couple of rooms in the basement, and he has the back part all fenced off so you can't see in the windows, and he won't open the door unless you go into the front part of the basement."

"Mother out?" he asked as the maid opened the door. "Well, all we want is cake."

While the generous portions were disappearing Fatty stuck to his grievance. "I say he's a miser: and I vote we find out what he's got down there."

"Better not, had we?" said Tony, weakly. City life was wearing on Tony. There seemed so little to do.

"Yes, come on," urged Fatty. "If they nab us, I'll take the blame. Honest, fellows, Peters is no good. All he wants is your money. You ought to see him grab a quarter. Wait, I'll show you; I've got fifty cents — let's go down."

In the elevator, Fatty quietly offered Peters the coin. The man seized it and shoved it deep into his pocket. "Thank you, Mr. Ransier, thank you! That helps, that helps!" he said.

On the street Fatty turned to the boys. "Well?" he said.

"Well," said Tony, "I win! I *know* I'm right."

"You make me tired, Tone! Everybody can make an easy mark of you. Now I'm going to prove that *I'm* right. Tonight I'm going to go

down cellar as soon as it's dark, and see what he's got locked up there. Are you fellows game? "

" Yes," said Tony. " I want to go."

" So do I! " said Chuck.

" Well, then it's a go," said Fatty, " and I feel like a burglar already."

Chuck and Tony came back about eight o'clock.

" Fellows," said Fatty, " I have a feeling that mother had better not know this."

" I say it's a mean trick," said Tony.

" It would be, Tone, if Peters wasn't such a snipe. He's not worth considering, the little grafter! "

The boys sat around, feeling like conspirators. It grew dusky.

" Come on," said Fatty. " He's in the elevator now for three hours. I don't know why we should feel so mean. We don't intend to steal his pile. I just want a squint through those windows."

They waited until the elevator went up, then dodged down the little blind stairway that led from the hall into the half basement. It was very clean down there, and dark and still. They did not dare turn on the electric lights, but Fatty had a pocket electric torch.

" Those are rooms for fuel," he said. " I was down here once or twice. The furnaces are over there, and his rooms are behind them. Come along! "

Guided by Fatty's light, they stepped briskly



across the great, empty space, taking care to make no noise. As they cautiously circled the great furnaces they heard, apparently from the air above them, a hollow cough. It was a strange and ghostly sound. Fatty, well in the lead, started violently and dropped his light with a crash. Chuck and Tony grabbed each other. No one spoke or moved. There was no other sound.

Hastily Fatty rejoined his friends. He pulled them to him and in a shaky whisper said: "What was that?"

"Somebody coughed," whispered Tony.

"Naw, it wasn't!" said Chuck. "It was one of the furnace pipes making a noise."

Fatty lit a match and found the pocket light. The fall had not improved it, and it gave only a feeble glimmer. Fatty threw the light around, and for a long time the boys stood in a silent group. There was absolutely no sound. The cough, if it was a cough, was not repeated. Fatty nudged the boys and they noiselessly retreated to the windows in the front part of the cellar, where, in the light of the street lamp showing in, they made an effort to fix their little electric torch. It was not a success, however, and Tony urged Fatty to give it up.

"Now, look here," Fatty whispered, "I believe that was a *human* cough if it was any at all, and three of us wouldn't *imagine* it. That's no sort of a noise to be hearing in an apartment

house. What if that snipe has got somebody locked up down here? I wouldn't put it past him! We ought to look into it."

"That's what I say," agreed Chuck. "But I think it's a ghost. It sounded just like a ghost."

"Aw, ghost nuthin'!" scoffed Tony.

"Sure thing," said Chuck. "They have 'em, any number of 'em, in England. Father says the ghost at a place called Edgerton Manor used to give a hollow cough just before it appeared. I suppose to kind of prepare you."

"What did it look like when you saw it?" asked Fatty, glancing over his shoulder.

"Oh, it was fierce!" Chuck assured them. "First thing you would hear this hollow cough, or perhaps a couple, because you know you might not be listening first off; then you would see this hooded figure moseying along toward you without a sound. You couldn't see its face until it got close up, and then you saw it didn't have any."

"Head cut off?" asked Fatty, hoarsely.

"No, worse than that! Most of its face had been sliced away by a sword-stroke. Then it would wring its hands and groan, and suddenly disappear."

"Well, what did the old gike mean by plugging around, scaring folks?" demanded Fatty.

"Why, it always appeared a week before there was to be a death in the house, to warn 'em. Father saw it once."

"He's alive?" said Fatty.

"Sure," said Chuck, "the fellow that saw it didn't die."

"Don't see why not," said Fatty. "I'd have died! I'd have just dropped dead without any fuss or bother."

"Well," said Tony, after a long pause, "there are no ghosts here, anyway: but I don't call this much fun. Let's go up."

"All right," said Charlie. "Let's!"

"No," said Tony, unexpectedly. "Let's not! I'm going back!"

"Why, what's eatin' you, Tone?" asked Fatty. "There's no ghost at the Alhambra. A ghost would have a fat job, I must say, looking after all those families. Come on, let's go upstairs. We've had all I want of it."

"Go ahead," said Tony, with the bulldog firmness which Fatty knew so well. "You might just as well go if you want to. I don't care if I go alone. It don't bother me any."

"Well, I don't see what ails you," said Fatty. "You didn't want to come when we planned it. You know you didn't! You put up all sorts of kicks. Now you're dead set to go on. I don't see as this is any fun. As far as the old ghost goes, why, they may have 'em in England, but I'll bet you can't find 'em here. Don't be a goat, Tone! Old Peters isn't worth our time."

"Perhaps not," said Tony, stubbornly. "I

didn't want to come, I own, but that was no ghost coughing. It was a human being. And I'm a Scout, so I'm just going to satisfy myself that everything is all right. Why, it won't take a minute to listen at that door or look through the key-hole. If anybody's in trouble, we can tell it too quick — so I'm *going!* ”

“ That's right enough, Fatty,” said Chuck. “ I forgot that we are Scouts. I think it's up to us now to see the thing through.”

“ All right,” said Fatty, “ I'm game! ”

They turned and tiptoed back to the furnaces. It was nothing but a chance, of course: but as the boys passed the spot where they had heard it before, another hollow cough sounded, seemingly from a great distance. Fatty, who was nervous, jumped and gritted his teeth. Chuck clinched his fists. Tony turned in the direction of the noise. Big, square pillars supported the building. On the other side of one of these, in a partition, was a door. Tony went around the pillar. The door was ajar, and a faint light streamed out.

Thunderstruck, the boys looked in, in their amazement drawing close to the mysterious apartment. It was a large room, and the light which made it possible for them to see it shone from another room beyond. The place was comfortable, even handsomely furnished. The floor was thickly covered with rugs of all descriptions, from plain squares of rag carpet to torn old rugs from the



far East. All sorts and tags of furniture, most of it good, but none matching, filled the room. In the dim glow, which scarcely lighted the room at all, everything looked better than it was.

"Say," whispered Fatty, "ain't Peters the swell?"

Tony nudged him sharply. Tony had ears like a fox: and he had heard in the further room a soft, pitiful sigh.

The boys stood rigid, holding their breath. Again the sigh trembled on the air, and the three boys all heard it. They nudged each other violently, hitting elbows midway. For a long, long while they stood there, staring about the dark room and listening for some further sound. The stillness was painful. There was something about the comfort and daintiness of the room that made Fatty and Chuck suddenly aware that they were engaged in a contemptible trick. Fatty pulled Tony's sleeve.

"Come on!" he whispered in his ear.

Tony shook his head. "I'm going to see who that is," he said.

"Well, what good will it do you?"

"Don't know," said Tony, "only I'm just going to do it, that's all."

"Well, you old bullhead, go as far as you like!" hissed Fatty, angrily.

The inner door swung a little. The boys drew back into the darkness. A dim figure appeared

against the light: a slight, ghostly figure in floating, white garments.

The figure moved slowly forward. Fatty's blood froze. Was it coming out to them?

It hesitated in the middle of the room, then turned and, crossing to a big couch, drooped slowly down and, leaning toward the little table beside it, switched on the electric reading light. The boys gave a gasp of surprise. There, with the light turning her fair hair to threads of gold, was a beautiful girl. She was very thin and frail, and seemed to move as though she had no strength. She rested her head listlessly upon the cushions, and again a sigh of weariness or pain cut to the hearts of the three watchers. Fatty jerked their coat sleeves and began backing noiselessly away. As they reached the furnaces a quick step sounded in the stairway.

"Peters!" breathed Fatty.

As he approached, the boys noiselessly circled around to the other side of the furnace nearest them. Peters passed and the boys breathed again. Fatty must have breathed too hard: for with a rattle and crash the fatal torch-lamp dropped from his hand.

With the quickness of a cat, Peters leaped to the electric button, and flooded the room with light. Then, before he gave one look for the boys, he closed the open door. When he turned and recognized the three guilty explorers, he was a pic-

ture of absolute fury. At first he could not speak.

"Well, young gentlemen," he said at last, "this is just what I looked for sooner or later: but somehow I never expected it from *you*. What devilment had you to do I wonder if I hadn't appeared? What had you planned to scare that poor, sick, little lass in there? I jolly well thought she was safe down here from prying eyes, where she could spend the rest of her poor, short, little life in peace — and you, Mr. Ransier, I thought you was a gentleman: and these was your friends! If I had half the size and strength of my wishes, I'd thrash you all if I lost my place for it. You young, thieving, spying curs — you — you — "

Tony stepped suddenly toward him, and took the little man by the arm.

"Shut up, Mr. Peters!" he said firmly. "You've got to hear what I say. Now come over here where the young lady won't hear us and I'll tell you how it happened."

"I don't *care* how it happened," repeated Peters. But Tony, who was taller and much stouter than little Peters, dragged him away from the fatal door.

Fatty felt that they were in for a very bad time. He'd never seen anyone so raging mad as Peters, and he had never felt so low down, so dirt cheap in his whole life. It had looked such a lark, such a harmless, boy trick at first, but the way it had turned out was awful. Peters — poor Peters —

with a sick child: and such a child! Fatty choked down a groan as he remembered the golden hair and great, blue eyes he had seen. Much as Fatty hated girls he acknowledged that *there* was a girl no one could hate. She was too feeble. It made you want to do things for her. Fatty wondered if her mother was in the other room. He woke up — Tony was speaking.

“Now look here, Mr. Peters,” he said. “This is all my fault, and I’m going to do the talking.”

“It’s not your fault,” cut in Fatty. “You know I started it, Tone!”

“Shut up, Fat; I’m talking!” insisted Tony.

“We thought that you were awful mysterious about the place, Mr. Peters, because you kept Will in the front part when he came down to see you, and we thought you sort of camped down here and it would be a joke to find out about it.”

“Spyin’!” said Peters bitterly.

“Yes, I guess that’s the English of it, all right,” said Tony, with a blush. “But we won’t leave any of it out, at any rate. Well, we came down and fussed around, and over by the furnace we heard a cough. At first it scared us; we thought it was a ghost. We talked it over and the other fellows wanted to go back.”

“Afraid!” sneered Peters.

“No,” said Tony, “but somehow they didn’t want to go on. But I got it into my fool head that there might be someone in trouble or someone



that needed help, so I said that I was going on with it. So, of course, the other fellows came along. You see we are Boy Scouts, and we've got to do all we can for other people all the time."

"Is that what you name it when you spy on a man, and come near to scaring his poor, sick, little lass to death?" asked Peters.

"Look here, Peters," burst out Fatty, "I never *dreamed* you had a daughter or a family. Why, man, you must *know* we wouldn't have scared her for the world. We never *dreamed* you had a place like this down here. It's all rot, Peters, for you to say you think we would have hurt her. Gee! We were getting out as fast as we could when you came, and if I hadn't dropped that light, why, no harm would have been done. We wouldn't have told. It's your affair if you want to live down here and hide your family away. Now I'm sorry about it, Peters. It was all my fault, and I apologize. The other fellows came because I put it up to them that it was a lark. Tony isn't the sort that spies, and neither is Chuck."

"Neither is Will," said Tony, earnestly. "Why, he'd not do a mean thing for the world. Honest, Mr. Peters, we are awful sorry! I tell you if there was a thing in the world we could do to *show* you how sorry we are, we would do it."

"That's straight," said Fatty, then remembering Peters' thirst for tips, he dived into his

pocket and brought out a five-dollar bill. "I wish you'd take this, Peters," he said, pushing it into Peters' hand.

"No, thank you, Mr. Ransier," said Peters, drawing back, "I can't take it today somehow, sir; I'm too sore."

"Please take it, Peters," urged Fatty; "take it, and then we'll feel that you believe what we're telling you. Take it and give it to Mrs. Peters, and ask her to get something for the little girl."

Peters, overwrought and bowed by his sorrows, gave a dry, crackling sob.

"That's just it," he said finally. "There ain't no Mrs. Peters!"

## CHAPTER V

### PETERS' CONFESSION

"She's dead," said Peters, simply. "Died when the lass was a little un, only four years old. Now she's fifteen, and she's going same as her mother went."

"Oh, I guess not," said Tony, hastily. "She's all right! Why, she looks dandy!"

"It's her lungs," said Peters. "She ought to be in the woods. I went up there a while ago, but there's no work there for such as me. I'm such a little tike, and I've but had to do with cities. I couldn't leave her there alone: she's not strong enough to fend for herself, so here she is with me; and I'm doing my best while I have her. And that, Mr. Ransier, sir, is where your money went. Lord, I knew 'twas not right to accept so much from a boy, but how could I refuse it when it meant a lot of luxuries that a janitor's pay won't buy?"

"Why can't you work in the woods, Mr. Peters?" asked Fatty, the five-dollar bill still burning his fingers.

"There's nothing for a man like me to do there," said Peters, sadly. "You see I'm but a wisp though I'm strong. But people are afraid

to try me at work on account of my size. My size was big money to me once," he smiled. "I was a jockey over on the other side years ago."

"Honest?" said Chuck. "I love horses. Don't you ever ride now?"

"Never," said Peters.

"How did you happen to strike this job?" asked Fatty.

"Just chance," said Peters. "Wait till I speak to the lass and I'll tell you about it."

He left the room. Fatty rolled a relieved eye toward the others.

"Say, that was a narrow squeak!" he sighed.

"You bet!" said Chuck. "He was mad enough to shoot us."

"Aw, I don't mean *that*," jeered Fatty. "I mean meeting the girl."

"Why, she looks like an awfully nice girl," said Tony. "She must be so lonesome. I wonder if Peters lets her see anybody at all. Here he comes."

"Well, young gentlemen, since you have seen her you may be interested to know how I happen to have such a daughter. I've an hour to spare, and if you like I'll tell you about it. I'd jolly well like to talk to someone sometimes. I bottle myself up and bottle myself up and sometimes I can't rightly bear it. I know, Mr. Ransier, that you've thought me strange and surly: but I could not help it, indeed. I am in great trouble, young gentle-



men, but I think you will own that I have tried to bear it alone.

“ When I was a lad I was a jockey, and one of the best. I was born and bred in Devonshire, and when I began to ride 'twas for the Edgerton stable, and 'twas Harry Edgerton's famous horses carried me. Why, 'twas I who rode Blue Belle against Thunderbolt; and I brought May Day in a nose ahead of Filippo: and I was on the Monk when he — but hear me: how could you be interested in this? ”

“ My father lived at Edgerton when he was a boy,” said Charlie.

“ Did he? ” asked Peters, “ what was the name? ”

“ O'Connors,” said Charlie.

Peters shook his head. “ I didn't know him,” he decided.

“ Well, I rode my best, and I loved the string of beauties, and I did well. Sir Harry was like a brother to me. I wooed a sweet lass whose father was landlord of the Edgerton Arms. There was another chap loved her, and he was a jockey, too; and when she said him no, he swore he'd do me. And he did: for the blackguard rode with me in a race, and he swore that I'd fouled his horse. I was so mad, knowing why he'd done it, that I struck him and they disqualified me.”

“ They did what? ” asked Tony.

“ Sent me from the track. I could ride no more.

Well, my sweetheart, Alice, came down the lane that night to meet me, for I'd sent her word I was heading for America, although Sir Harry stood my friend. She came down the lane, and she said, 'Phil, what does it mean: this note?'

"I said, 'I'm off; Alice.'

" 'Why?' she said.

" 'What is there left?' I asked her. 'I can't ride. I know well your father will not let you marry me now. I have no friend but Sir Harry: and I'm off to America.'

" 'Is Sir Harry more your friend than I am, Phil?' she said, soft.

" 'No, I'll not say so, Alice, but you will soon forget me.'

" She laughed. Young gentlemen, she had the sweetest silver laugh.

" 'I'll not forget you, Phil. I'm so afraid to have you go alone, and you so careless about taking cold. I saw Sir Harry today, and we decided that 'twas only safe for me to go along and look out for you. And here's our passage,' she added.

' 'Tis a present from Sir Harry! '

" Well, young gentlemen, I could not speak for a bit. So we came to America, and I got work as trainer at some big private stables on Long Island. The people were millionaires, and seemed like they never tired of doing for Alice: and we lived like lords.

" 'Twas there little Alice was born: and 'twas

there four years later that her mother died, and there she rests so far from home. I couldn't abide the place after my Alice died, and I went to Buffalo. There I stayed until two years ago. The cold lake winds hurt my little Alice, and we came here. The doctor bills and all had drained me dry: and I took this place as the first one offering. Alice and I had little lodgings over yonder, but I saw the rooms here, and asked for them and they let me have them with some old furniture from the garret. Mostly those who go leave bits behind, and I've fixed them up so that Alice is housed like the little lady that she is. That's all, young gentlemen. I'm a failure: I'm just Peters, the janitor, but that little girl over there is as fine as God makes them, if she is my daughter. She is educated and as well mannered as the best, like her mother before her. She is all that I have: and can you wonder that I couldn't bear to have you do aught to frighten her? "

"I should say not! But honest, Peters, did you think that we would wrong her? I tell you," said Fatty, patiently going back to the beginning, "we didn't *dream* of anything like this. Now here's the best thing to do. Don't tell her about us at all, see? We will see what we can do for you. Don't you think it is damp down here? "

"No, it is dry enough, but she does need the sun," said Peters sadly. "For awhile I took her to the roof, but I don't dare leave her there because she faints."

"Well, Peters, do you mind if I tell my mother about Miss Alice?" asked Fatty.

"I hate to bother her," said Peters. "It looks like asking sympathy."

"What rot!" said Fatty. "I'm going to tell her, and I'm going to tell her *now*."

He started for the door. "Say, Peters, I wish you'd just *say* it's all right. I'm so sorry it happened."

"I'm not sorry," said Tony. "Not a bit!"

"It is all right, sir," said Peters. "I'm sure you understood me, and somehow it has eased me."

The boys, all shaking hands with Peters, filed upstairs and sat in a row on the base of one of the great stone lions at the entrance to the Alhambra. Fatty removed his hat and brushed back his thick locks.

"Never, never, *never* again for mine," he vowed. "Say, I never went through so many kinds of feeling in that length of time in my life. I felt bad enough over John, and when he commenced to get well I thought I'd take a rest: now here we are with the girl on our hands."

"Why, we won't have to do anything," said Chuck, "not unless we want to, anyhow."

"But we will want to!" said the gentle Tony. "We are so sorry for her, you know. The best way is to tell our mothers and I guess I'll go home and tell mine now. She's not going to like all of the yarn a little bit," said Tony.



"Nor mine!" said the others.

Going up in the elevator, Fatty clapped Mr. Peters on the shoulder and smuggled the five-dollar bill into his pocket. Having done so, he heard a sigh of relief and went whistling into the apartment.

On the divan sat the two Carrolls. They wore white trousers and dark coats. Fat, knotted silk ties of a blazing purple color burned under each round chin. Purple silk socks adorned their fat ankles. On their laps, each held an expensive panama. As Fatty entered, they arose.

"Ah, old chap," they remarked. "Just waiting for you! Mighty glad you came!"

"So am I," said Fatty, with a glance at his parents' dismal faces. "So am I, fellows! It was good of you to wait just to say good-night."

He shook each by the hand, and moved slowly toward the door, taking the Carrolls with him.

"Come again when I'm in, so we can visit. Awfully sorry you've got to go. Good-night!"

With a firm hand on each fat shoulder, he steered them into the hall and closed the door.

On the divan his mother had her face buried in a pillow. Mr. Ransier was regarding him over his glasses. "I can't help wondering at times, son, what you are going to be when you are grown. I must say that was a masterly move."

Mrs. Ransier's pretty face popped up from the pillow. "Are they really gone?" she asked. "I wonder if they know what has happened. Yes,

"Will, I'm like your father," she said. "I wonder what you will be."

"I won't be a janitor, anyway," said the future Ambassador to England, finally.

"That's good," said his father. "It is the only profession that I've known you to shy at. You've run a great course, Will; everything from circus master to missionary. I don't see just why you balk at the job of janitor. Seems a very safe and uneventful life. Of course there are bad times, when you turn Mrs. Brown's steam off in zero weather and put full head on for Mrs. Jones, who never likes much heat. But those things will occur. I think, Will, I'd have a spell of being janitor if I were you."

"Not for mine," said Will. "I *know* a janitor, and that's enough! Say, motherkin, I've got a job for you — it's another orphan."

"Not the janitor, I hope," gasped Mrs. Ransier. "I just simply *can't* adopt Peters!"

"It is Peters' daughter," said Fatty, "and mother, I think us Scouts will have to come to the front. She's fifteen years old, mother, and I guess she's going to die: and she's awful pretty."

"Do *you* think she is pretty?" asked Mrs. Ransier, sitting up very straight in her amazement.

"Yes, I do," said Fatty, "but of course I didn't have to speak to her. You will though — Oh, you will have to get into the game, motherkin!"

"I don't know what you've done or whom you have found: but I'll promise now to help you out, son, if only for what you did tonight."

"That's the best mother ever!" said Fatty, patting her on the arm. "Now I'll tell you the whole thing, and then you say what you think."

He left out no part of the story. Mr. and Mrs. Ransier looked pretty grave at the motive of the affair, it was too much like plain spying: but they laughed and laughed over the ghost part.

That night, after Fatty had gone to bed, satisfied that his father and mother would see the fellows through, Mrs. Ransier said: "I'm not a bit sleepy. Why not see that Peters man tonight? If it is just as it looked to Will, I think that it is a very sad case."

Mr. Ransier went out to the elevator and spoke to Peters. "He will be off duty in fifteen minutes. We just caught him," he said, returning to his wife. "I think you are right. We may better have our talk first before the boys make any mistake."

It was a long and serious consultation which followed. When Peters finished Mrs. Ransier's lovely eyes were soft with tears, and Mr. Ransier was troubled with a bad cough.

"Now, Peters," he said, "I am convinced that you have done everything in your power for that little girl. The manly part for you now is to accept some help. I grant that it may not

be easy or agreeable, but it is now the really *manly* thing for you to do. We want to help you, and you must allow us to do so: but we won't take the credit or pleasure of the task from our Boy Scouts. In the morning we will have a talk with them, and you may be sure, Peters, that we have your little girl's welfare very much at heart."

Early in the morning Mrs. Ransier went down into the basement. She was gone a long while. Mr. Ransier and Fatty had both exhausted their patience before she returned.

"It is simply *pitiful!*" she exclaimed. "And the child is an angel. I don't wonder that you said she is pretty. And such sweet, attractive manners."

Fatty fidgetted.

"She won't have to be here, will she, mother-kin?"

"No, my dear, the child is too ill to be anywhere but in her own room. She must be moved at once. I think, dearest," she said, turning to Mr. Ransier, "I will spend some of *my* oil well on the child. In fact, I have already commenced. The very tiptop apartment in the house is small — really a bachelor apartment; and I have taken that for her. It is extremely airy and sunny, and she can be moved up there in the elevator."

"That was a very wise thing to do," said Mr. Ransier, heartily. "What about furniture?"

"Peters has plenty. He has the rooms full



of castaway furniture, and he has mended and tinkered and polished and re-covered things until they fairly shine. And he is so happy! He is sure now that she will get well. Well, they will be happy for a while, at any rate."

"Well, I don't like it," said Fatty.

"Why, *Will!*" said Mrs. Ransier.

"No, I *don't!*" said Will. "We found her and we wanted to help. You've done it all. I tell you the fellows will be sore!"

"Done it all?" cried Mrs. Ransier. "Well, I have not! I have scarcely made a beginning. In the first place, I don't think that Peters actually has enough to eat. He spends every cent on medicines and tonics and cod liver oil for that child. His skin is fairly stretched over his bones. If you can't think up some scheme to make *him* eat, she will outlive him. That is the very first thing. Second plan, if she is to be saved, she must have a trained nurse. Someone to give her oil rubs: and take care of her generally. Oh, yes, she simply *must* have a nurse. They come high, Will! Twenty-five dollars a week. You Scouts will have to work."

"That's what we want," said Fatty.

"Well, in that case you had better go help Peters move. Take everything from one room first, and then let Peters take his daughter up and shut her in there. Then she won't catch cold."

Fatty started and at the door met Tony and

Charlie, whom he took with him. Peters greeted them with real pleasure. They soon had the freight elevator loaded, and in a very short time one of the airy rooms, blazing with sunshine, was ready for the sick girl.

"Now we'll skin out," said Fatty, losing his nerve as usual, "and we'll come back as soon as she is fixed."

"I'll go down and help you get her," said Tony. "It's hard work moving sick folks."

Fatty, leaning against the stone lion at the door where they were waiting to be called back for the rest of the moving, shook his head solemnly.

"Honest," he said, "now *doesn't* Tony beat the Dutch? He'll go down there just as easy as if he saw girls every day, and help move her. Perhaps he'll even help put on her shawl! He's a perfect wonder!"

"Honest he is," said Charlie, overawed at his friend's daring. "You just can't get his goat. He's a holy terror, Tony is!"

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SCOUTS' DEFIANCE

"Morning, Will!" called DeForest Carroll with enthusiasm in his squeaky voice. "How's everything?"

"Fine," said Fatty. "How are you?"

"Couldn't be better," said DeForest. "I have an order for two hair-receivers."

"Hair-receivers?" said Fatty blankly. "What are *hair-receivers*?"

"Why, little china boxes with a hole in the cover to put your combings in," explained DeForest, easily. "I have an order to paint two."

"Oh, you have!" said Fatty. "Well, won't they be sweet? What you going to put on 'em?"

"Apple blossoms on a French grey ground on one, and pink bow knots on pale blue on the other," said DeForest, glibly.

"It sounds perfectly dear," said Fatty seriously, "but awful puttery. Isn't it?"

"Oh, no; I like to do it," said DeForest. "But I'm so sorry for Clement. He can't think up a thing to do. He wanted to tend the telephone for *pater*, but *pater*, he said he couldn't afford to risk anybody's life, and wouldn't have him. *Mater* was awfully peeved at *pater* about it."

"I should think so!" agreed Fatty. "Wonder if we couldn't think something up. There ought to be some work just fitted to a fellow of Clement's talents."

"There must be," said DeForest, with conviction. "But you see so many things are not suitable for fellows in our class."

Fatty gritted his teeth. "Yes, that's so," he agreed. "Now I wonder if the things *I've* done would be all right."

"Oh, of *course*, dear chap," said DeForest.

"Well, then," said Fatty, wickedly, "once I worked in a creamery; but that won't do because there's none about here. I had a paper route, too. We'll consider that later. Then for a while I carried home washings for people. Had a little express wagon, you know, and used to put the baskets in and take 'em around to the wash-woman. That would be easy work for Clement," said Fatty, rolling an innocent eye at DeForest.

DeForest was apparently on the verge of choking, his round, pale eyes popped, his round, red mouth hung feebly open, his pink cheeks blazed.

"I worked in Mr. Trotter's grocery, too, off and on. Oh, yes, and I worked in the livery stable. That's the ticket! We'll get Clement a job in a garage. I notice he's crazy about automobiles. Where is he? We'll put it up to him."

DeForest struggled to speak. "Better not,"



he said. "Really, I'd advise you not to. Clement is very hasty, awfully hasty."

"Hasty, how?" asked Fatty.

"Why, his temper, you know! Really he is very violent!"

"What does he do?" said Fatty, "Lie down on the floor and kick and scream?"

"Not any more," said DeForest innocently. "He controls himself wonderfully now. And I think he is better since you came. He looks up to you, really."

"Awfully good of him," said Fatty, nudging the stone lion. "I like to feel that I am of some use in the world."

"Oh, you are; really, old chap, really! And you are such a good mixer! Clement and I don't mix very well, and it's too bad, because the *pater* is really hipped on the subject. Always quotes some bally old writer who said some rot about the proper study of mankind being man. I don't see the good of mixing, myself, or didn't until we met you. The *mater* is dead set against it."

"Where's Clement now?" asked Fatty.

"Never saw you apart before."

"He's busy with the manicure."

"Do you mean she's shinin' his nails?" demanded Fatty, with a glance at his own well-kept hands. "Can't that dub even take care of his own fingers?"

"Why, of course, not properly," objected DeForest.

"Well, DeForest, that's one way where dear Clement could earn a little. I'll give him a few lessons in the simple knack of doing things for himself and see how it goes — oh dear, oh dear, I think I must leave you, DeForest! Too much whipped cream was always bad for me!"

"I don't quite catch your drift, old chap," said DeForest, with a smile.

DeForest showed a dimple when he smiled: but poor Clement had two.

"All right," said Fatty. "Guess I didn't mean anything at all: but I need some air, so good-bye."

Fatty walked rapidly down the street. "Do good to somebody all the time," he mused. "If that doesn't mean the Carrolls I'll eat *my* hat. I wonder if the Scouts *could* beat them into shape. It's worth trying because it's about the toughest job I ever saw. But they *must* have *some* good stuff in them. Dr. Carroll is a peach!"

As he reached Lawrence Street he paused. Tony was hurrying toward him up Paul Street, and Charlie had just turned down Lawrence. When the boys met, Fatty said solemnly:

"Boys, we've got to have a council of war to-day. Let's go up to the flat and chin awhile. Mother is there with John. I brought him over from the hospital for the day: but we will go into my room, and then if we need mother to consult with, why, she'll be handy."

John, still bandaged but growing stronger every day, was propped up on the divan with a look of perfect happiness on his face as he watched Mrs. Ransier at her writing.

"Hello, John! 'Lo, mumsy! We are going into my room to consult," said Fatty.

"Oh, very well," said Mrs. Ransier, smiling at the boys.

"It's a funny thing," said Fatty, when they had shut themselves in, "it's a funny thing about dimples. Now my mother's dimples always make me want to kiss her; and the Carrolls' dimples make me mad every time I see 'em."

"It's the Carrolls and not their dimples that make me mad," said Charlie. "I *know* I'm going to do something fierce to those kids some day. I never have a square show, anyhow. Just because I'm Kid O'Connors' boy, why, I mustn't fight; because my people are so touchy about it! Wish I could go off somewhere where no one knows me, and have a good fight—I'd just like to spoil some pill's mug for him. I'd like to do it just once; then I think I'd be satisfied."

"Say, you are in a sweet mood," said Fatty, "and I bet it won't improve when I tell you what I've got framed up for you."

"What now?" said Charlie. "Yesterday it was house-breaking and burglary. What's on today?"

"Playing nursemaid," said Fatty.

"That girl!" roared Chuck. "Well, I guess not—not for mine! You have another think coming *this* time, Fatty."

"Hold on, hold on, dear child!" said Fatty. "The truth is so much worse that I hate to tell it to you. Fact is, I'm about decided that we will spend the summer reforming the Carrolls."

There was a long silence. Tony beat his head with his open palm.

"You can decide all over again then," said Charlie. "I don't like the sample."

"All right," said Fatty, "but I think it would be a good way to spend the summer. Now it's up to us to get busy. So far as I can see, we are doing a lot of loafing; and for one, I'm sick of it. We'll have a good time and it will be all sorts of sport to put them through."

"How about the girl?" asked Tony.

"That's another thing," said Fatty, "but mother has to come in there. I thought the Carrolls would be sort of a rest after taking care of her."

"They might," Charlie agreed.

Fatty recounted the conversation of the morning, while the boys laughed and laughed. A tap on the door was followed by Mrs. Ransier's curly head. "May I come and hear the joke?"

Fatty told the story again and Mrs. Ransier joined in the laughter.

"That certainly is funny," she said, "but



really, boys, I think your plan is a very good one."

"It's not *our* plan; it's all and every bit Fatty's," said Charlie. "I'm not very strong for it myself, Mrs. Ransier. I think it will be an awful waste of time. Why, you can't *make* anything of fellows like the Carrolls."

"I don't know whether you can or not, my dear," said Mrs. Ransier, kindly: "but isn't it worth trying? Wouldn't it *seem* worth while if you succeeded?"

"I suppose it would," said Charlie. "But Mrs. Ransier, you don't see the side of them that we see; you don't see the *worst* side of them."

Mrs. Ransier sighed. "To be perfectly honest, Charlie, I hope that I *do*, because the side I see is very bad indeed. So silly and so unboyish. I do think that it would be fun for you Scouts to see what really could be made out of such material."

"There's one thing you can't make out of it, anyway," said Charlie, "and that is a boxer. Father has tried and tried. Dr. Carroll put him up to doing his best with them. Doctor said he wanted them to box because that might convince him that they were not girls. Poor man, I guess he's not so crazy over them himself."

"Don't say that! Of course he loves them, but perhaps he *would* like to have them a *little* different. I don't think you Scouts have been very busy lately, have you? I would feel sorry to think that city life makes you careless. Think it over, why

don't you, before you decide to let the chance slip. If you could help put manhood into those boys, or rather *bring it out* (for it surely *must* be there), it would be a task well worthy of your order. Don't you think so? "

Fatty sighed. " Yes, I *do*," he said: " and I'm for trying it. "

" I'll try," said Tony Keene.

" So will I," said Charlie: " but it certainly makes me tired just to think of it. What shall we do first, Mrs. Ransier? "

She laughed. " I cannot tell you," she said, " and now that you are really going to try it, I am willing to confess that I think that you've taken up a *very hard task*. "

" Say, motherkin, that's exactly like you," Fatty burst out. " Honest fellows, mother is the limit! I really think she is! That's an old trick of hers. She goads you into doing a thing; the harder it is the more she tries to make you do it. Then when she's made you think you've really *got* to do it, she just sits back, and looks pleased and proud and worried and says: ' Dear me, Will, what a *wonderful* thing for you to think up! *How ever* will you do it? ' Oh, you needn't blush, mother: I'm on to your curves! "

" I'm blushing for *you*, you bad, disrespectful child! " laughed Mrs. Ransier, showing a full set of the dimples Fatty loved. " And I'm so cross that I'm going right back to stay with John! "

"No, you're not," declared Fatty, firmly. "Now you have settled *that* question for us, you can settle another. *What* are we going to do about Peters?"

"Peters?" asked Mrs. Ransier innocently, "Peters? Why, what about Peters?"

"You know what I mean!" he said.

"Oh, do you mean his *daughter*? Why don't you *say* what you mean, Will dear? I would never have guessed. Well, boys, I want to tell you all I think about that case. You have heard Peters' side of it, and you have seen the little girl. I have had two doctors here to see her. Now, boys, they both say that she will die. If she had been taken to the woods a year ago she might have lived. Poor, *poor* Peters, when he took her into that basement, he did the worst thing he could possibly have done. Of course he does not know this. I think that he would go crazy if he should think it. That child is all the little man has to live for. And the doctors say she will die. And she is so young and so pretty and so sweet! Her mother must have been a very superior sort of person. Boys, I have a feeling that perhaps the doctors are wrong—I do not doubt that she has lung trouble, and I am sure that she is a very, very sick child; but I think that if you boys want to take the case, that there is hope for her yet."

"What can *we* do?" asked Tony anxiously.

"I'll tell you," said Mrs. Ransier, "but first if you will listen I want to tell you a story.

“ When I was a young girl I spent a good many of my summers with friends in the North Woods. Now the lady with whom I stayed was a good, good woman. She had the welfare of the whole countryside close to her heart; and one day she said: ‘ Elizabeth, there is a young girl a mile from here who is dying with consumption.’ ”

“ I said: ‘ Why, Mrs. Laker, I did not think that people could die of consumption in the North Woods! They come here to get well, do they not? ’ ”

“ ‘ This poor child is dying at any rate,’ said Mrs. Laker. ‘ She is poverty poor and lives in a house that is like a wood-shed. No plaster, just unmatched boards, where the snow drifts through in winter. If she could only be warmly clothed and decently fed, her last few months would be easier, at least.’ ”

“ I had some money that had been given me, and of course I rushed off to the little town near by and bought yards and yards of soft red flannel; so much of it that Mrs. Laker sighed at the thought of the poor girl who could not live to wear it out. Mrs. Laker volunteered to make it up into the needed garments, and I then gave the rest of the money to Mrs. Laker for groceries. I went home a day or two later, and by-and-by I forgot the girl. You see I had never seen her. Two years passed before I saw dear Mrs. Laker again. Well, seeing her made me think of the poor girl, and I asked how long she had lived. ”



“ ‘ My dear, she is alive and well, and is engaged to be married,’ said Mrs. Laker.

“ ‘ *Alive!* ’ I said. ‘ Why, didn’t she *die?* ’

“ To make the story short, boys, all the poor girl needed was sufficient clothing. When that was supplied, her poor, little, chilled body gathered sufficient warmth to make her well.

“ Now the case we have on hand is a little like that. Alice does not need clothing; but she *does* need an interest in life. She is fading away for lack of it. She is a young creature, and she is shut up like a bird in a cage. She has absolutely no companions. She has nothing to fill her thoughts. She is too weak to make an effort, and I don’t see but what you must make it for her.”

“ Oh, mother,” groaned Fatty, “ what do you want us to do? ”

“ Well,” said Mrs. Ransier, “ when little John was so hurt, and I made up my mind what ailed him, I went to work to do what seemed best. I felt that I had the key to the situation, and I *defied death*. I wouldn’t *let* him die. He needed *me* as long as he had no real mother. That stupid nurse might have done as well if she had had eyes to see. He wanted loving.”

“ But mother! ” cried Fatty in a tone of agony.

“ Oh no, my dear Alice has all the loving she needs. Poor Peters *adores* her. He loves her so much that he is too tender to her. She will surely die as things are, unless you boys make a great

sacrifice, and give her the change and companionship that I feel she needs. Come, boys, isn't it worth trying? I know you have no use for girls, but wouldn't you be glad to think that long ago some boy had saved your mother's life? "

" Oh, Lordy, Lordy! " groaned Fatty. " I wish she was at the bottom of ten feet of water! "

" Why, Will Ransier, what a wicked, *wicked* thought," gasped his mother, her blue eyes flashing.

" Why, no," said Will. " I only meant that then it would be such a cinch to jump in and bring her out. I'm strong on that sort of life-saving. Now, mother, come right out and tell us what we ought to do. Make it good and plain so we can make up our minds whether we can do it or not. As far as I can see, it's an awful job you're putting up to us. "

" Not too hard for these nice boys to tackle," said Mrs. Ransier, flashing her winning smile at the three discouraged lads. " Not one bit too hard for you three. And it will do *you* good as well as Alice. Now let me tell you. As I said, the dear girl is just pining for lack of interest. She came here to Syrchester sick and a stranger: and she has not been well enough to make a single girl friend. If you boys had sisters we could call upon them to help us: but boys, you are Scouts! Take hold of this as joyfully and cheerfully as you would of any other task, and as you would say, make

good. You, Will, can take her for short rides every day. I think she could stand it if you went slowly enough. Tony and Charlie can visit with her. Only ten or fifteen minutes a day. Tell her about Fred, Tony, and what a fine fight *he* is making to get well. You, Charlie, can interest her in physical exercises: and you will doubtless help her more than either of the others. Take up a task worthy of you, my Boy Scouts; defy death, and see if you can save that little girl."

"Fierce! But I guess we'll have to pick it up," said Fatty.

"Looks so!" said Charlie gloomily.

"Why, we won't mind," said Tony. "I have some girl cousins and they are real nice. I don't mind 'em at all. We will have to get a lot of fellows to help with the Carrolls, but let us three look after Peters' little girl. What do you say?"

"All right," said Charlie, "and we'll call it the Scout Defiance: so we've *got* to win out."

## CHAPTER VII

### THE CARROLLS LEARN TO MIX

“ Why wear your bestest necktie, son? ” said Mrs. Ransier the following morning. “ I thought this was city-cleaning day. ”

“ It is, ” said Fatty, grimly, “ and it’s more than that. Didn’t you hear me say yesterday that I would be the first to go see that girl? Say, mother, what do you *talk* to ’em about anyway? If I could only paint hair-receivers like DeForest, I could show her them. I’m going to call: but she’s going to do the talking or there’ll be a frost. I guess all I ever said to a girl in my life was ‘hello.’ That is, unless I was made to. This would be *pie* for Clement and DeForest. ”

“ That is just the reason you need the experience, my dear, ” said Mrs. Ransier, earnestly. “ You think that Clement and DeForest are great jokes; yet they are perfectly at ease when you are utterly lost. I hate to think that my son, who can ride and swim and shoot and is growing up to be a true sportsman, is unable to talk easily and pleasantly for half an hour with a strange lady. ”

“ Gee, that’s straight from the shoulder, mother! ” laughed Fatty.

“ It is meant to be, ” said Mrs. Ransier. “ I



would be very happy to have you gain the ease and grace of the Carroll boys, without their silly and affected ways."

"Well, I'm certainly prepared to do my best, at any rate," said Fatty.

"Then you will succeed, my dear."

Fatty's confidence in himself oozed more and more as he approached the Peters' door. He walked up. Somehow, he did not want to take the elevator, and talk to Peters.

He reached the door and pushed the button, hastily glancing at his watch. He'd tell her he had an engagement in fifteen minutes.

The latch clicked. At any rate he didn't mind the nurse, and perhaps the girl was too tired to see anybody. Fatty looked up hopefully as the door opened.

"Good morning!" said Alice Peters.

"Oh, good morning!" stammered Fatty. "Are you at home? I mean I thought I'd come up and ask how you felt. I'm Fat—I mean I'm Will Ransier!"

"Come in," said Alice. "I thought that you were Will Ransier. I've heard my father talk of you. I'm feeling very well, thank you."

She led the way into the sunny sitting-room, and sat down facing him. In the next room the nurse moved busily about. Alice sat looking at him quietly.

"It's a nice day," she said.

"Fine!" said Fatty.

He laid his hat on the floor, then immediately picked it up.

"Dandy!" he said, looking out of the window. That gave him an idea. "Do you like automobiling?" he asked.

"I've never ridden in one," said Alice.

"Is that so?" said Fatty. "Mother says — that is, I'm going to — I mean, would you like to go some day?"

"Indeed I would!" said Alice eagerly. "Only I don't believe I could. I get so tired."

"Oh, it will rest you," Fatty assured her.

There was a long pause. Fatty couldn't think of anything more to say about automobiles. Games — perhaps she liked games.

"Did you ever play hockey?" he inquired.

"No," said Alice, "I don't know what it is."

"Great game!" said Fatty.

"I never had a chance to learn," said Alice.

"Is it anything like checkers?"

Fatty looked at her with a sigh. "No, not a bit," he replied.

"What do you like to do best?" said Alice.

"Swim," promptly. "Next to that I like to ride horseback and shoot. But I'd rather swim."

"It must be wonderful," said Alice. "How do you make your arms go?"

"Dead easy!" Fatty said.

Once more he put down his hat. Then he kicked

it under his chair out of the way, and proceeded to tell Alice how to swim. He explained the different strokes, and told her how to dive. He was a good talker, was Fatty Ransier, and he led her down, down to smooth, sandy places where the water weeds grow and the startled fishes leap away. He told her about the accident at Fishers Point, and she shuddered at the account of Foxy Peck lying crumpled up on the sand, fifteen feet down. He gave all the credit of the saving to Tony; but because she was a girl, and because he told her, she did not believe a word of it and regarded him from that moment as a hero. When the nurse came in with a glass of malted milk for Alice, Fatty looked at the clock and then consulted his watch. "What's the matter with those things?" he demanded of no one in particular. "It's not as late as that. I've only been here about fifteen minutes, haven't I?"

"I think the clocks are right," smiled the nurse, and Fatty got himself out without accident, and dashed down the stairs two steps at a time and burst in upon his mother.

"Well, that's done," he said, undoing his best tie.

"Poor dear, it took a long time, didn't it? It must have been such a bore."

"Well, honest, mother, it really wasn't a bore! That Alice girl isn't silly like lots of 'em, and she's an awful good talker," said honest Fatty,

never realizing that for the last three-quarters of an hour of his call, Alice had had no chance to say more than "My!" and "Oh!" at intervals.

It was the day set for the great city-cleaning crusade: and every Scout in the city had been ordered out, to assist. Fatty was hours late, but soon found the other fellows, dirty and happy, digging out the unsavory rear of a little grocery on Dawley Street near by. Five or six strange Scouts worked with them.

"Say," called Chuck as soon as Fatty came within hailing distance, "where you been?"

"Went up and called at the Peters'," said Fatty, mysteriously.

"Well, for cat's sake!" said Chuck. "Did you stay all morning? What are we up against, anyhow? Is it fierce?"

"Naw!" said Fatty. "Guess we can do the trick all right."

"Fine!" said Tony. "I thought we could."

"Say," said Chuck again, "what do you think those crazy Carroll kids are up to to-day? They are out with the fellows cleaning things up."

"What for?" gasped Fatty. "It's not their funeral!"

"It may be, at that," grinned Charlie. "They are down on Barnet Avenue now. They've got on sweaters and old pants, and they wanted to go into the worst locality I knew about."

"Why, what ails the idiots?" said Fatty.



"They said they had talked it over, and had decided to go in on this and see if they were really fitted for Scouts. I told 'em to begin on something easy. Why, great Scott, this is no work to break them in on! They are stubborn brutes, though, and said that was the reason, they might as well try the most distasteful thing going. Then they would know if they could stick it out."

"Did they say *distasteful*?" asked Fatty.

"Course: you didn't think *I* did, did you?" growled Chuck. "So I sent 'em down on Barnet Avenue, where they'll most likely get their heads punched if they are not careful. Well, we are through here, and I say we go down and have a squint at the boy wonders, and see how they are turning out."

As the boys turned into Barnet Avenue they saw, a block ahead, a shouting crowd.

"Bet it's the boys," cried Chuck, beginning to run.

As they dashed up and pushed their way in, they beheld Clement Carroll facing a big rowdy, whose blotched face was crimson with rage. Clement was carefully rearranging his tie and unbuttoning his sweater.

"You don't do no cleaning in my back yard, you don't!" roared the big fellow. "You fat little fool, you, keep out of my place, and keep your pals out or I'll do you good!"

"Sorry," said Clement in his high, girlish

voice, "awfully sorry, old chap, but we've got to do it. You really ought to assist us. Your place is certainly very unsanitary, you know."

"Don't you call my place names!" yelled the big boy. "You better find a better name than that and find it quick, or I'll push your face in for you."

"Well, it's rotten then, if you prefer," said Clement, calmly. "And I think we'll go in now and clean up, since you haven't the decency to do it yourself," and he turned to go.

The fellow gave a roar and, leaping forward, launched a heavy blow. It struck Clement on the neck, and staggered him.

Chuck took a step forward and Fatty jerked him back.

"Let him alone!" he whispered.

Clement looked the bully over.

"Very unsportsmanlike!" he piped, reprov-  
ingly. He undid his tie, put it in his cap and handed them to DeForest, who stood near, pale and silent. Then he took off his sweater. He buttoned his left glove and stepped up to the sneering bully.

"I hate to touch you," he remarked, "but really you need a good thrashing."

The fellow roared and came at him. To Chuck's surprise, Clement parried the blow prettily, and came back with a lunge that took the fellow in the left eye, but he drove a terrific right hander, fol-

lowed by a left which caught poor Clement on his round nose, and covered him with a freely flowing stream of blood.

Clement turned pale.

"He's sick," said Fatty.

"No!" gasped DeForest. "Oh dear, he's losing his temper! Oh dear!"

Clement *was* losing his temper. Once more the bully drove home on Clement's eye. It closed. A look new to the boys came into his face. He began to remember his lessons. Blow after blow he rained upon the big fellow, whose wind was beginning to leave him. Clement seemed fresher every instant. It was evident that the stranger was trying for a clinch, but Clement fooled him.

A blow under the ear sent Clement to his knees, but he scrambled up and dashed under his opponent's arm before he could follow it up.

Watching his chance, Clement circled around his foe, then sent a crashing right against the point of the rowdy's chin. He crumpled up and went down in a heap. Chuck leaped in and threw both arms around Clement.

"Oh glory, glory!" he cried, "that was lovely! Wait until I tell father. Say, why didn't you fight like that before?"

"Never needed to! Did I hurt him much?"

"He's pretty groggy, but he'll come—Gee, here's the patrol!" cried Fatty, leaping to his feet as the big, covered automobile came clanging down the street. Two policemen leaped out.

"Boy Scouts, eh?" said one, looking at them. "Nice work for you, I must say! This fellow has had an awful crack. Did you give him that?" looking at Clement.

"Certainly," said Clement through his swollen nose. "And I meant to do bore, obly he didn't stad ub log enough."

"Well, you are a bloodthirsty young savage! You can come and tell the Captain about it. O'Connors, did you see this? Get in! And you, too!" he added, indicating Fatty and Tony, and two other boys who were not in Scout uniform.

"Rud hobe and get be sub clean hadkerchiefs," called Clement to his brother who hurried at once toward Paul Street, bearing his brother's cap.

At the station the two policemen took the big fellow, who still was wobbly on his legs and assisted him in to the Captain. Clement followed, Fatty and Chuck on either side, and the two strangers close in the rear.

The Captain leaned back in his chair for a long time looking at the boys.

"Well, you are sights!" he said.

"Good bordig!" said Clement, politely.

"Good *bordig* yourself!" said the Captain with a twinkle in his eyes. Clement stood waiting the Captain's next move. His own father would not have known him. His soft white shirt was smeared with dirt and blood. One sleeve was



torn almost out. His left eye was closed, and his nose looked like a red pincushion. He still wore his gloves, but the right one was split across the knuckle. The leathery face of his foe had not suffered so much, but he looked ragged enough at that, and swayed unsteadily.

"He liked to killed me, Cap," he said, pointing to Clement. "He came near busting my jaw."

"What made him attack you?"

"It's more than I kin tell you," said the boy. "I was sittin' on our steps and this snide comes up and he says, 'Git out o' here!' and kicks me."

"Oh, really!" said Clement. "Do please stick to facts! You know that's not true."

"Hope I may die if it ain't, Cap!" urged the boy.

"Let's see! Your name is Branders, Bill Branders, isn't it?" said the Captain. "And you know me, don't you, Bill? Well, we'll see what these other boys say. Did you see the scrap, fellows?"

"Yes, sir," said the group.

"All right. Let's hear your story, Charlie; you ought to have the hang of it."

Charlie stepped to the desk, and gave a clear account of the whole affair, the boys agreeing with every particular.

"Well, Bill," asked the Captain when they had finished, "what have you to say to that? You're

under suspended sentence now, aren't you? I guess you'll have to go to see Judge Grove: and let me tell you that I shall tell him that you need a good hard jolt. I wish I could give it to you. I tell you, Bill, I'd enjoy it!"

Bill began to whimper. "Say, Cap," he said, "this ain't fair! All these kids are lyin'. I ain't got no friends here to tell how he fit me first."

"Take him along," said the Captain. "He's the biggest nuisance in the whole ward."

Bill was led off muttering, until the policeman at his elbow gave him a sharp shake.

"Better get right home, Carroll, and fix up your face. I'll hold you to appear when wanted. You stay here a moment, the rest of you."

"If you will allow be, Cabtain, I'll use your telephode," said the disfigured Clement, in his own easy manner. "I think I'd bedder call a taxi."

"Wouldn't an ambulance be better?" laughed the Captain.

"Do, I'b all right," said Clement. "I odly hobe my brother has told my bother about it."

"It will kind of give your mother a set-back, won't it?" said Fatty. "Say, Clement, while the taxi's coming, wish you'd tell what ever got into you to go on such a crazy bat anyhow."

"Yes, it's out of your line, isn't it, Carroll?" asked the Captain.

"Dot ady bore," said Clement. "See my father wanted be to be a Boy Scout. I told De-Forest that it would be well to try it sobhow to see if we liked it. We couldn't think of anything more disagreeable and dirty than this cleaning affair, so we cাবে out and took a hand. Thed I bet by friend and I really had to thrash him."

"Yes, you *did*," said Chuck. "I thought I was going to have to do it myself, at first: you were so polite and so slow getting to work."

"Well," said Clement, "a fellow has to be polite; and I wouldn't spoil that tie: it was a present from a young lady. She bade it herself. See if I hadn't taken it off, old chap, it would have been spoiled!"

"It sure would!" said the Captain, looking at the red shirt front. "It sure would!"

Clement, riding home in the taxi, was in pain but happy. A new force stirred within him. He felt *thinner*, straighter, more of a man. It was very strange. He certainly disliked to fight, and was disgusted at his condition: but he had found out that he *could* fight and he would never feel the same again. He buttoned the sweater closely over his chest, drew Fatty's cap over his disfigured face and trotted into the Alhambra and up the one flight to the Carroll apartment. His mother opened the door, looked at her eldest born and burst into a fresh flood of tears.

"Oh, Clement, Clement!" she wailed. "How could you do it?"

"Dever bind by looks, bother," said Clement.  
"It was dot as bad as I look and soud."

Dr. Carroll put his hand on the boy's shoulder and turned him to the light. "Nothing the matter with him, Celeste! He'll be all right in a day or two. Why, these are honorable scars! I didn't waste the money I gave Kid O'Connors, did I, son?"

"No, you didn't, father," said DeForest. "Why, that fellow would have killed Clement if he hadn't had boxing lessons. He was heavier, and half a head taller. I tell you I was frightened at first, but Clement was perfectly calm."

"I had to be," said Clement. "It was a bally nuisance fighting like that in the street. I felt awfully common for a bidute, then I thought, 'Bix, Clemed, bix!'"

"You thought *what?*" cried the doctor.

"*Mix*," explained DeForest. "Don't you know that's always what you are telling us to do?"

The doctor roared. "Well, you *mixed* all right this time, son," he said, patting Clement on the back. "Now let's fix that face—I'm too proud to find that you are a real boy to want it spoiled!"

He took Clement by the arm and went with him to the bathroom. "By George!" he said. "It's going to be convenient to have a sawbones for a daddy if you are going to 'mix' very often."



Mrs. Carroll, who had stopped to listen, again broke into loud sobs. "Oh, DeForest," she wept, "I have given up my life to you boys! I cannot believe that after all my years of teaching, and of protecting you from evil influences, that *MY SON* could return to me in such a condition. It is really unbelievable. Sometimes, DeForest, I fear that your father has low instincts which are cropping out in Clement. Why, his whole manner is changed!"

"Sure thing!" said DeForest, cruelly; "it's a good thing for him. I've learned a lot today—I want to mix, too!"

His mother covered her eyes. "Leave me!" she cried. "I cannot bear it. Tell Marie to bring me a cup of strong tea."

DeForest went to the bathroom and reported the conversation. Presently the doctor came out, still smiling, and found his wife, teacup in one hand and smelling salts in the other; while on her knee, ready for use, was a dry handkerchief.

"Celeste, you are making a mistake," said the doctor gently. "But it is not your fault wholly. You are like many American women,—you have been too sheltered and cared for to be able to realize the stern necessities of a boy's up-bringing. It is the happiest moment of my life today to find that Clement, whom I considered a pretty poor specimen of a *boy*, was ready and willing and properly equipped to do the *right thing* at the

*right time.* He may never have to fight again as long as he lives: but at least he knows that he *can* fight. He has started now, and he'll learn the other needful lessons."

The doctor cleared his throat. "It makes me proud, my dear, to think that in a very few years I shall be the father of a *man*."

As he finished, a loud crash resounded from DeForest's room.

"What fell?" called the doctor.

"Nothing," assured DeForest. "I just smashed my hair-receivers!"

"Why, I'll have *two* men for sons!" said the doctor, proudly.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE CONFESSIONS AT THE FAIR

Some time after the famous fight, Doctor Carroll and Mr. Ransier met on the steps of the Alhambra.

“ Haven’t seen you for some time,” said Mr. Ransier as the men shook hands.

“ No; a doctor leads a very uncertain life,” said Dr. Carroll. “ Our boys see each other often, however. They seem thoroughly to enjoy each other’s society.”

“ Yes, they have great times together,” laughed Mr. Ransier.

“ You have heard the latest, of course,” said the doctor. “ I mean their plan for securing the concessions for the popcorn booths and check-rooms at the State Fair? ”

“ Yes,” said Mr. Ransier. “ Will mentioned in an offhand way that they were negotiating for them, and I hurried around to see the Fair Commissioner in order to give them some financial backing, if necessary, but they had arranged it all themselves. They are a great lot, doctor! ”

“ They certainly are! We will have to go over and buy popcorn, at least. To tell the truth, I think that their care, and the new interests they

have presented to Alice Peters, will save her life. There is a doctor at Wild Wood Inn, where she is staying, and he and I keep in touch all the time. He is very favorably impressed by her improvement. The child has a remarkable way of making friends. I do not believe Miss Simmonds, her nurse, could be induced to leave her. If she has no set-back, I think she has a fair chance of life. I will go up myself in October and look her over carefully. In the meantime, it is keeping the boys hustling to meet their share of her expenses. But it is good for them; very good for them! It gives them a taste of responsibility and an understanding sense of life. I shall regret very much if we lose our little patient, for the boys would always feel that they had not made sufficient efforts."

"Decidedly we must not lose her," said Mr. Ransier. "What is there that could be done, that has not been tried?"

"Not one thing," said Dr. Carroll. "I think that your wife's wisdom has saved the day in filling the child's life with new interests. At present the fact that she must help to look after little John keeps her from thinking of herself. I am convinced that your wife sent him up there for that purpose."

"She is quite equal to it," said Mr. Ransier. "Well, if I can do anything, why, call upon me. I think our kids will do well at the Fair, and we



must certainly ride over and see them. I have a friend from Lexington who is to bring up a string of horses. We are to have some running races this year, I believe. If DeWolfe comes, we will see some beautiful animals."

"I'd like very much to see them," said Dr. Carroll. "There's nothing I like quite as much as a fine horse. I have not told my boys, but I mean to get them each a riding horse this fall. I wish to show them some practical proof of my pride in the change that I see in them. I owe it largely to your son, Ransier."

"Not at all!" said Mr. Ransier. "There is good stuff—fine stuff in your sons, doctor, and I don't doubt that the Boy Scouts brought it out more rapidly than it would otherwise have appeared. Well, we will go to the Fair together then, doctor, so cure your sick people all up in good season."

"I will, I will," said the doctor.

In arranging for Alice to go to the North Woods, Mrs. Ransier had offered to pay all the expense of the nurse, Peters paid for the child's medicines, and the boys assumed the burden of her board and other expenses. There were five of them now, for the Carrolls, who were now Tenderfoot Scouts in good standing, had begged to help on the plea that Peters was their janitor as well as Fatty's. It was well that the boys did join forces, because there was always ten dol-

lars a week to be earned for Alice's board, besides a reserve fund which Fatty decided was necessary for unexpected expenses. They had been obliged to deposit quite a sum as guarantee of good faith when they secured the popcorn and checkroom privileges at the fairgrounds, and their treasury was now empty, to say nothing of the loans secured from Tony's and Fatty's own bank accounts.

"Never mind, we'll go the whole dog," declared Fatty, in one of their frequent consultations. "If it breaks us, all right — but we stand to make a bunch of money. Why, we've got to! Now the only thing to do is to just hustle."

They did so, and the morning of the Fair found every popcorn stand on the fairgrounds in charge of white jacketed Scouts. Fatty, who had been unanimously chosen manager, walked nervously from one place to the other, directing and explaining. The two Carrolls had charge of the big checkroom at the entrance. The first half of the first day of State Fair week is always depressingly dull and quiet; and the boys passed through anxious hours as the hot popcorn piled up with but few buyers. Fatty made his rounds oftener, and his words were cheering, but he fretted inwardly. Still he did not despair. Fatty was always filled with a conviction that he would succeed.

A number of the Lafayette Scouts had volun-

teered their services, well repaid by the fun of the venture. One of the most important stands in the centre of the grounds Fatty had put in charge of Spider Morrison and Geezer Reed, with the feeling that Spider's jolly face and funny lisp, and Geezer's dry wit would draw trade. It certainly did so. Spider, willing to do his best for the cause, used his lisp for a drawing card, and rent the air with his calls.

During the afternoon trade picked up, and by four o'clock the boys were all busy. Tuesday morning things started off rather more briskly, and late that afternoon the boys were working in grim silence.

During the afternoon Fatty went over to the paddock to look at the horses belonging to Mr. DeWolfe, his father's friend from Kentucky. Fatty had never seen Mr. DeWolfe, but it was easy to recognize the gentleman who was raging and stamping up and down outside the stall of a hooded and blanketed pacer. Fatty sidled up and proceeded to listen.

"Outrageous, suh, perfectly outrageous!" he roared at the short, fat man, evidently a trainer, who stood sulkily chewing a straw. "Piece of absolute carelessness! You should have kept hold of that nigger every step of the way No'th. I should have brought him myself. The idea of lettin' him fall off the cah right heah in Syrchester, and break his mizzeble laig!"

"Why, Cunnil, we couldn't help it," replied the trainer.

The Colonel was too angry to hear.

"Heah I am tryin' to show these No'therners a real runnin' race, heah I've risked bringin' Sweet Alice up heah in all this heat, and there's nobody I'd trust to ride her. I'd give one thousand dollars for a good jockey who would win that race!"

Fatty's eyes bulged. "Peters!" he whispered to himself. He stepped before the raging Colonel and lifted his hat.

"Colonel DeWolfe?" he inquired, with an air that even the polite Carrolls might have envied.

"Yes, suh! What is it?" exploded the Colonel, scarcely glancing at him.

"Did you mean what you just said about a jockey, sir?"

"I suttently did!" said the Colonel.

"Well," said Fatty, "I'll bring you a first-class jockey in two hours. If he is satisfactory, will you stick to the bargain?"

"On the word of a gentleman, my boy!" said the Colonel, the frown clearing from his brow.

"Very well, sir," said Fatty, and left the paddock, his brain in a whirl. Hurrying through the entrance, he heard a clear voice hail him.

"Where away, Will?" it called. There in the line of automobiles just passing in at the great arched gateway was his father's car. He dashed



up to it, hastily greeted his mother and Mrs. Carroll, and cried:

"Oh, father, will you give me this car for an hour?"

"What's the matter?" asked his father. "Did you forget something?"

"No," said Fatty earnestly. "It's the biggest deal I ever carried through, if I do get away with it. I can't stop to tell you."

"Ladies," said Dr. Carroll, "you surely would not stand in the way of a great financial deal, would you?"

"Decidedly not," said Mrs. Carroll, rising. "Let's give up the car, by all means!"

"Oh, thank you ever so much!" said Fatty, hurrying to open the doors. Laughing at his prompt acceptance, they vacated the machine.

"Back home!" cried Fatty to the chauffeur, and waved his cap as the big car moved away.

It seemed to Fatty that he would never reach the Alhambra. They were held up at railroad crossings and in the crowded streets. At last, however, they stopped at the apartment, and Fatty rushed past the stone lions and pushed the bell for the elevator. It descended with aggravating slowness.

Fatty commenced talking at the first glimpse of Peters' shoes. He was in full swing when Peters' baggy knees descended, and was saying: "So get a move on yourself!" when Peters' amazed face appeared on a line with his own.

"If you will please to say that all again, Mr. Will?" he asked.

"Get the other elevator man!" said Fatty, "I'll tell you all the news as we go back. You've got to come to the fairgrounds with me. It's a big thing, Peters! Where's that elevator boy, anyhow? Down cellar? I'll get him! You get into some other clothes!"

Once started, he told him the whole affair.

"Now what do you say, Peters? Can you do it?" he demanded, shaking the little man's skinny arm.

"For my Alice," he said. "Why, Mr. Will, sir, I will ride if I have to lift the horse down the home stretch!"

"That's another funny thing," said Fatty, suddenly remembering. "The mare's name is Sweet Alice."

"It's a sign," said Peters, solemnly.

"Do you suppose," asked Fatty anxiously, "that you've forgotten how to ride?"

Peters gave a short laugh. "I jolly well haven't!" he said. "I was born in the saddle like, Mr. Will, and ridin' is like breathin' to me, an' easier. I looks older than I am, too: and I'm under weight, which is a good thing for a jockey. Blarst me!" he cried with a shaking voice, "I *want* to ride. If I can get a good horse under me again, I'll forgit me troubles for so long at any rate. 'Sweet Alice,' eh?" he mused. "Well, a

beauty ye must be and I'm pinin' to see ye. An automobile's but a slow thing at that, is it not, Mr. Will? "

" There are the fairgrounds," said Will, smiling at Peters' impatience as the speedy car bumped over bridges and whipped around curves. He knew well how it felt to Peters. Fatty showed his pass and directed the chauffeur to the paddock. Jumping out, he hurried into the DeWolfe stables and bumped into his father.

" I told you, Ransier! " cried the voice of Doctor Carroll, " I was sure, from the Colonel's description, that it was your son."

Fatty marched past them and up to Colonel DeWolfe.

" Here's the jockey, sir, and I am sure that he will win your race," he said.

The old Colonel glanced at Peters with a critical eye.

" Well, my man, you've got the right build. Where did you ride? "

" 'Twas long since; but you needn't fear that I've forgot. I rode in England. I rode for Sir Harry Edgerton of Edgerton."

" That's rather odd," said the Colonel, turning to the ladies. " Sweet Alice heah is a descendant of the Edgerton horses. Her great grand-dam came from there."

Like a flash Peters entered the big box stall, and with a practiced hand stripped the covers from the glossy black beauty.

He looked her over, his face quivering. "I can name her great grand-dam, Colonel DeWolfe, sir!" he cried, his voice shaking. "She was Queen Blue Belle and she had that star, and the reddish hair down in her mane."

"Now that *is* odd," said the Colonel again. "Well, I'll take you on, Petahs. I doubt your winning; she's freakish, very freakish, and you say you've not ridden for years: but you'll do your best I don't doubt, since this young man backs you. Better try her today, Petahs. Unfortunately her race is set for tomorrow. I wish I could get it put ovah."

"It's not necessary, sir," said Peters. "You see 'twill help a good bit, my knowing her blood."

"Well, we will leave you with her, my man. I will be in latah."

The party left the stable and walked slowly back toward the main building.

"Well, suh," said the Colonel, "unless that little man has forgot to ride, it looks to me like it was a good thing the niggah broke his laig."

Fatty, in perfect agony to tell the amazing news, hurried to the stand presided over by Tony and Charlie. Kid O'Connors and his wife were there talking to them.

Fatty's wonderful tale was received with whoops of delight.

"Well, that was great, simply great!" said Kid O'Connors. "He'll ride all right if he's



English. It's not the prejudice of my blood: but certainly the English jockeys are the greatest in the world. Where did you say he came from, over there? "

"From some place in Devonshire," said Fatty. "I forgot the name—I'll ask him. Why, there he is now! Wonder if anything's wrong! "

Fatty gave a yell and Peters, who was evidently in search of him, hurried up.

"I'll not be able to get back to the Alhambra tonight, Mr. Will," said the little man. "I don't want to leave the little un for a minute. She took to me like a brother. It's jolly funny to see that trainer back there. He follows every step I take. He says it is because he's afraid I'll get lost. Me lost after fifteen years around American cities! He's afraid I'll run away or get hurt before the race. Why, Mr. Will, I'd not miss riding that race for what's left of me life. I'm going to saddle her soon—won't you come round? But I'm so mixed up with happiness: what I started to say was, could you most kindly see if that elevator boy can do my work until tomorrow? I'll pay him well. He will have to get someone to take his place while he eats."

"I think our chauffeur can run an elevator," said Fatty. "If he can't, why, we'll have to hang up an 'Out of order' sign on it. I tell you, Peters, this is an important affair. We can't stick at a little thing like an elevator. Why, what ails Mr. O'Connors? "

They turned, and together stared at the Kid. His firm, clean-cut face was colorless: his deep-set brown eyes were fixed upon Peters with a look of wild intensity. Peters, meeting his gaze, stared back with a wonder which passed into utter amazement and unbelief.

The Kid took an unsteady step forwards. "Philip Evans!" he said in a low voice.

Peters began to shake. "Don't fool me!" he cried. "It can't be — it can't be — it — is — my little Peter, ain't it?"

"Yes, brother, it is!" cried the Kid.

With no thought of the crowds watching, the two men kissed each other, a proceeding which caused Fatty to kick his left leg violently with his right foot and made the Kid's admirers doubt their senses. It was hard to believe that their hero of the ring could be guilty of such weakness.

"My — my little Peter," said Peters, putting his hand on the taller man's shoulder. "Why did ye never write me?"

"I did often," said the Kid, "until I got tired of having no answer. I thought you must be dead. And here we are in the same city together at last!" He turned to his wife.

"Mary, this is my brother Philip that I've often told you about: and you've seen Charlie many a time, I'll be bound!"

"Many's the time," said Peters, "but I never dreamed it was my own nephew; and him so good

to Alice! How strange things do come out! It's queer how you knew me, Peter; I've certainly changed."

"Not a bit," said the Kid. "A little thinner, maybe, and some lines and a grey hair or two: but very much the same. What made you change your name, Phil?"

"That's a long story," said Peters, sighing. "And you were not born Kid O'Connors! Isn't there as much fighting stuff in the name of Evans?"

"More!" laughed the Kid. "I'd never dare stand up against an Evans myself. But that's a long story too, brother, and we'll have to sit somewhere and talk it all over. Where will that be?"

"Come to the paddock tomorrow morning," said Peters. "I'll only be busy off and on with my little mare and there'll be plenty o' time to visit."

The trainer, who had fidgetted in the background, hurried up. "Any time you're ready, Peters," he said, "I'll show you the way back."

Peters looked at him pityingly. "Mr. Blair," he said, "I could find my way back to that sweet, pretty, little mare if I'd wandered farther afield than this. But I'll walk back with you now. You'll see to the elevator boy then, Mr. Will? I'm sorry to trouble you, but I must stay right in that stall tonight. Good-bye for tonight, brother Peter."

Fatty dropped wearily down on a box. "Say, fellows," he said, "don't you ever say a word against dime novels, or nickle libraries, or picture shows again. The way long lost brothers have cropped up around here today gets my goat. And Peters even knows the great grandmother of the mare he's going to ride! He knew just how many red hairs this one ought to have in her mane. What do you suppose is due to pop up next? I mean *after* the race? Of course that ~~is~~ next on the program."

"Dunno," said Tony, smiling.

And it was well indeed that he could not see the horror that lay before them.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE HOME STRETCH

By nine o'clock the following morning all the Scouts associated in the Popcorn Trust had taken turns going to see Peters and Sweet Alice. At nine-thirty both Peters and the horse disappeared in the interior of the racing stables at the other side of the track, followed by the fidgety trainer and the still more fidgety Colonel.

What looked like a toy saddle dangled from the Colonel's hand. The other hand held a bundle of scarlet and black satin. "Gee," said Charlie, "our new uncle is going to look like a sofa pillow!"

As the morning went on the excitement about the stable grew keener. Stable boys hurried here and there. Older men led horses up and down, hooded, blanketed, and bandaged like mummies. Each was followed by its rider or driver, worried, anxious, fretful as porcupines, and shedding orders like quills. Perspiring rubbers hurried here and there with pails of water. Gentlemen in silk hats with fat, shiny watch chains draped across fat figures, walked about watching the horses. On the track, slim beauties covered many times with a perplexing lot of straps and weights,

intended to control their paces, swept round and round, their drivers sitting carefully on the long tails spread across the sulky seats, and humped far over the horses' backs. At eleven o'clock the crowd, scattered about the grounds, began to move toward the mammoth grandstand. In the vast space underneath at long high counters, a nervous row of young men and elderly women dispensed "hot dogs," ginger ale, coffee, sandwiches and doughnuts. Everybody was in a frantic hurry, and everybody was hungry, ravenously hungry. The "hot dog" men could not slap the mustard on fast enough. The ham in the sandwiches got thinner and thinner, and drew further from the outside edges except when a large piece of fat sprawled all over the inside and hung out at one corner, making you pick that one because you thought there was a lot of good meat inside. People made change with a quickness and sureness that was amazing. Women, old folks and little children stood at the counters and ate sandwiches and "hot dogs."

At the Women's Christian Aid booth, where the muddy blackness of the coffee was offset by the pale blueness of mugs of milk, the attendants were so tired that they matched the milk rather well. Overhead came the hollow thunder of hundreds of feet tramping up and down the aisles of the grandstand finding seats. Along the front, next the rail, was a row of private boxes. Their

comfortable chairs looked very inviting to the hot, tired crowds gathering on the long, hard benches. It was a great day for Syrchester. Her greatest horse, which had raced so successfully in the West and South, was at last to trot at home.

"The Baron" was a household name among the lovers of horseflesh, and his owner, young Mr. Black, as he sauntered here and there, into the judges' stand or across the track, was watched by hundreds of friendly and admiring eyes.

At twelve o'clock the huge stand was full; at one, it was crowded; and the bleachers, at either side, were jammed with men and boys. At one-thirty, the "No Room" sign was put up at the ticket entrance to the grandstand, and disappointed hundreds, whose tickets had been secured far ahead, raged and roared at the row of policemen stationed there. The band, in one corner of the grandstand, played at intervals. When it stopped, a number of hot, tired, hungry babies screamed and yelled at the tops of their voices and were jounced into worse misery by their mothers. The private boxes gradually filled with beautiful women and dainty girls and well-dressed men. In the judges' stand the bell clanged.

Out in the racing stables, in the stall occupied by Sweet Alice, Peters and Kid O'Connors, sitting side by side on a soap box, had pieced to-

gether the torn fragments of their lives. The Kid had come to America to live with his mother's brother, when he was a little chap nine years old and, of course, he had the most to tell. Not many things happen to folks in an old English village, and Peters' life had been uneventful enough until the misfortune which drove him away from home.

"But why did you change your name, Phil?" asked the Kid finally. "Wasn't Evans good enough for you?"

"Too good," said Peters. "I did not want to carry it when folks thought me disgraced. So I called myself Peters in memory of you. But you changed too, lad. Why was that?"

"Oh, uncle had no boy, and all day long he was coaxing and promising, if I would only take his name. I did it to please him, and it's many a time I've wished it back, but I'm Kid O'Connors now to the end of the chapter. And there's this about it, Phil. Over here, as you've no doubt seen, names don't mean much. It's what you are, or what you do, or what you gain, that counts."

"It's true; it's true," said Peters sadly, "and I'm a failure, lad, just a failure!"

"Not a bit!" said the Kid, clapping his brother's satin-covered shoulder. "Don't you feel you can win the race?"

"Of course!" said Peters, simply.

"Well, then, that's all there is to it! You've



not had the ghost of a show for years and years. A jockey like you, a horseman trying to run an elevator! I'm a fighter, Phil, and I've got the belt for my class. I don't approve of the profession, but that's neither here nor there. What would I make of the job, think you, if I left boxing, and took to writing books? You have not had your chance, Phil, for these many years, but I've a feeling that your luck has turned."

"We'll hope so," said Peters, with a wry smile, "because I'll say this, that I'm not main strong for the woman's work, and the elevator rubs me the wrong way of the grain—I'll have to get back to the horses somehow or other, lad."

Across the track sounded the harsh clang of the starter's bell calling the first heat of the trotters.

"Think I'd better skip," said Kid, rising. "This will be the first of many talks, Phil. Good luck to you, lad! I'll not worry. I know you can lift the little girl under the wire ahead o' the others."

"I've got to!" said Peters. "I'm riding for *my* little Alice today!"

The brothers parted, and Peters turned to the black muzzle that poked fondly at him. Already he had won the little mare's heart. Taking off her blanket, he took a chamois and smoothed down the glossy, shining sides.

"We'll show them, won't we, Beauty?" he whispered.

Colonel De Wolfe, stepping in the door, saw and heard Peters' soft, coaxing whispers.

"Everything all right, Peters?" he inquired.

"Couldn't be better, sir."

"Do your best to win, then," said the Colonel, "although I scarcely hope for it: you are a total stranger to the mare."

"Oh, no, Colonel De Wolfe, sir, we are not strangers; we've just found each other again. I've told her all about Edgerton, and she knows we are old friends. I'll win, Colonel! It's not the mare that's freakish; it's the boy what's rode her. A horse is just pretty near what you make it so far as disposition goes. It's my opinion that nine out of ten is born with good, sweet tempers, and they got the wrong handling. Spoiled in the makin', sir, all spoiled!"

"Have you seen any of the other horses?" asked Colonel De Wolfe.

"All of them, sir! They are mighty good ones, but here is a better. We'll make it unless there's some accident," said Peters positively.

The Colonel sighed. He wanted Sweet Alice to win for many reasons: and he felt that he had chanced upon a great jockey: but even so the little mare was freakish when she got nervous, and he wondered if she would run true with a strange hand on the rein.

There was absolutely nothing to do, however, but return to the box where the ladies, with Mr.

Ransier and Dr. Carroll, sat breathlessly watching the last heat of the "Baron's" race. Suddenly, as Colonel De Wolfe slowly ascended the stairs of the grandstand, a roar arose. It sounded like a wave as it swept over the bleachers and the big stand. As the four horses came trotting into the last stretch, every person on the stands leaped to their feet. "Baron — Baron — Baron!" they cried: and as the home horse whirled under the wire, a scant nose ahead, a deafening cheer arose. Cheer followed cheer. Hats were flung up and young Mr. Black, slowly coming from the judges' stand, took the already blanketed winner, and himself led him toward the stables.

"Is there always so much enthusiasm?" asked Colonel De Wolfe. "I missed the other races."

"Oh, no!" said Dr. Carroll. "Syrchester is considered very cold: but that horse was bred here, and is owned by a man who is extremely popular among lovers of good horseflesh. No, Syrchester is very unenthusiastic usually. I've never seen the people so pleased. Why, your race is next, is it not, Colonel? Now, ladies, we will all have to give a 'good thought' as the mind cure people say, and perhaps it will help Sweet Alice and our friend Peters to win."

It was a good field for a running race. Six slim, clean-cut beauties filed out of the racing stable. The first was a magnificent, great animal fairly tingling with life. His rider was gorgeous

in green and gold. Next, all in blue, a long, thin jockey tried to control the skittish lunges of a dark roan. Three bays followed, and it was evident at a glance that they were scarcely to be considered in the race.

Behind them Sweet Alice picked her dainty way. Peters, flashing in his scarlet and black satin, sat her so lightly and held her so delicately that Colonel De Wolfe drew a deep breath.

"That fellow's a magnificent rider!" he half whispered.

As the horses drew up at the judges' stand, there was a shout and five tousled and excited boys dashed up the stairs, closely followed by an angry policeman.

"Come back here!" he cried and gave a lunge for the nearest one. It was Charlie O'Connors, and with his father's own quickness he slipped away from the officer and bounded to the top step. The policeman, now furious, made a grab and caught Tony, whom he jerked roughly toward the stairs.

"Here, officer!" cried Mr. Ransier. "Those boys belong in this box."

"Not on your life!" said the angry man. "Those boys have no entrance tickets."

"You've got them in your pocket, father!" yelled Fatty, furiously.

Mr. Ransier felt in his pocket and drew out the five colored slips.



"Yes, and we came near not seeing our own race!" said Fatty, scowling.

"Never mind, son, dear, you all are here now, are you not?"

"I don't know whether we are or not! We had the worst time to get under that fence!"

"Well, stand up at the back of the box where you can see over our heads," said Mr. Ransier.

The beautiful group of horses trotted gaily to the starting point, and lined up. Track hands stretched the barrier across the track.

"Go!" cried the starter.

The line leaped forward: all but the roan, who stood teetering a moment, then began to back. The starter's bell rang loudly, and the horses turned back.

Three times the roan held them back on a false start. Then the starter in the judges' stand put the megaphone to his lips and in a roar which could not be understood on the grandstand, warned the rider in blue that it was his last start. With a new touch, the jockey brought the roan into place and the barrier fell. Almost on a direct line, the six horses swept forward.

"They're off!" exclaimed Fatty. "Now we'll see what old Peters is made of!"

The grandstand was silent. Down came the horses and swept past the grandstand. Fatty, who had a voice big enough for four boys, roared over the Colonel's head, "Get a move on, Peters, get a move on!"

The Colonel jumped and smiled, then forgot everything but the group of horses speeding away round the track.

A third of the way round, Clement Carroll cried out, "Fellows, there are two horses falling out!"

"Good thing!" said De Forest. "They were no good."

Across from the grandstand a horse suddenly stumbled.

"Aw shucks!" said Fatty. "Got a stone in his shoe. Well, that cleans 'em down pretty well! Now if that old sucker will only ride — Oh, the old frozen face, she's falling behind! Ain't that the limit? Oh, Chuck, look at that — the old goat! Gee, I thought that bunch of money was going to help some!"

Chuck followed the horses with keen eyes. "She's not much behind!"

"*Much!*" cried Fatty, in agony. "*Much*, you silly idiot? She has no business to be *any* behind!" Fatty had forgotten all about Colonel De Wolfe. He stood pounding on the back of the Colonel's chair. Far away the horses turned into the home stretch.

The people stood to see.

"She's gaining!" cried Fatty, leaning far over the Colonel's chair. "She's up with the others! There goes that roan! Now there's only the black! She'll never make it — yes, she's up

to him now!—No, he's ahead—no, she's ahead!"

"Oh, ride, Peters, ride!"

Down the track thundered the pair, neck and neck.

"Gee, see the fellow on the black use his whip!" gasped Chuck.

"Where's Peters' whip?" cried Fatty again, agony in his voice. Then with a loud yell as the horses swept under the wire, "We've won, we've won!" choked Fatty and pounded the Colonel violently on the back. The other boys were hopping up and down and yelling with the crowd.

"Well," cried Mr. Ransier, "do you know what you are doing?"

Fatty, thumping the dignified Colonel vigorously on the back, stopped in embarrassment.

"Why, say! Colonel De Wolfe, I beg your pardon, sir! I *didn't* know what I was doing. But we won! We won!"

The horses came back to the judges' stand. Mr. and Mrs. Ransier and Dr. and Mrs. Carroll were shaking hands with Colonel De Wolfe and congratulating him. The Colonel's face glowed.

"Friends," he said, "winning that race meant a great deal to me. I bred that little roan myself, and I'm glad to be justified in her."

"Let's go over and see Peters," said Fatty. "We're off, mother!"

"Just a minute, Ransier," called the Colonel. "I want you to know that I was so certain that your man Peters would win that I wrote this out before I left my rooms at the Seneca House." He handed an unsealed envelope to Fatty.

"The money!" said Fatty in an awed tone.

"Well, I guess mother can tell you about Alice—you are mighty good!"

"She *has* told me," said the Colonel.

The boys fidgeted.

"Why don't you take the money to Peters?" said Chuck. "It will tickle him almost to death to think that the Colonel had the check all made out beforehand."

"All right," said Fatty, and with a shouted good-bye, they dashed down the stairs and in the direction of the racing stables.

"A thousand dollars!" said Tony.

"Made in about a second," said Fatty. "I think I'll be a jockey! I'm almost thin enough—"

"Well," said Charlie. "Not for mine! I bet there's no more in it than there is in boxing. You don't race every day, and it's a hard life spent in stables, and when you get too old to ride, why, you're just a stable hand or at best a trainer."

"Let's have a squint at the check," said Tony.

"Gee, I'm glad it's not in bills!"

Fatty slipped the paper from the envelope, and looked at it. He stopped.



"Say, I'm dippy!" he confided to the boys staring over his shoulder. "This won't do!" he said. "See what he's done! The old Colonel has made a mistake."

"Take it right back and show him," said Clement. "We'll wait here. He might feel a bit embarrassed."

Fatty sped through the crowd and breathlessly offered the check to Colonel De Wolfe. "You must have been thinking of something else, Colonel," he said. "You have made this out wrong."

The Colonel examined the piece of blue paper. He smiled.

"No, my boy, that is correct. It may not be exactly the amount specified, but it is near enough to cover my notion of just payment. Run along and see if Peters is willing to call it a square deal."

Fatty walked slowly back to the boys.

"What did he say?" they all demanded.

"He said it's made out all right," said Fatty in a dazed tone. "Told me to take it to Peters and see if it satisfied him."

"*Five thousand dollars,*" said Clement Carroll. "If money will do it, Alice is saved!"

"Come along and show Peters," said Tony, breaking into a run.

## CHAPTER X

### THE WILD-CAT AT THE BARS.

Peters, still in his top boots and smooth riding breeches, and the little satin jacket and cap of scarlet and black, stood near the mare's head, watching the men rub down the delicate, spring-like muscles that had performed such wonders. Alice kept her pretty muzzle turned toward him and her little ears pushed forward at the sound of his voice. She loved her new friend, recognizing, with an animal's delicate instinct, the love and sympathy which the little man gave her.

Peters was a *true* horseman, and not a make-believe. He first won the little racer's love and then he knew that she would do anything in her power for him. So he stood beside her, watching every move of her rubbers, while the boys gazed on in an agony of excitement.

Fatty, who bore the wonderful envelope, was kept well to the front that no time might be lost. Twice Fatty said "Peters," but Peters shook his head and smiled.

"Wait 'til the little mare is comfortable, Mr. Will, sir," he said, "then I'll be with you."

At last even Peters was satisfied, and the box stall was closed on the pretty winner, and Peters turned to the boys.

"Well, young gentlemen, I suppose you've come to shake 'ands," he said.

"Not yet," said Fatty, "We haven't time. Here's something for you to read."

Peters wonderingly opened the envelope. Once, twice he read the check. Then he laughed "That's a fair joke," he said.

"Joke *nuthin'*!" said Fatty. "I went back to see."

"Yes, he went back and asked the Colonel," said Tony.

"Hope to die, it's straight goods!" said Chuck.

"On honor!" said both the Carrolls.

They all talked at once. They hung on Peters' shoulders; they shook him by the arms; they poked grubby fingers into his satin-covered ribs; they slapped him on the back. Peters, jarred and jostled, did not seem to know it. He stared at the check like a man in a dream.

"Five thousand dollars!" he said at last. "Five thousand dollars! Why, boys, if money will do it, that ought to cure my little Alice!" His poor, lined, lean, little face worked pitifully. "*Five thousand dollars!* I felt rich as a lord with the promise of one thousand. Where is the Colonel? I must thank him for this, and I must tell him what it means to me."

"He's coming now," said Clement, looking out the door.

"Let me go alone, boys, if you please," said Peters, as the crowd prepared to follow. "There's things that you can best say man to man."

The boys watched Peters approach the big Colonel, and saw him take the little man by the hand. Then they sauntered back to their popcorn stands. Their interest in the races was over.

"Nice hearty handshake he appeared to be giving my new uncle," said Chuck.

"Well, he's a hearty, big man," said Tony.

"Ha-ha — cried-little-Willie-joyfully," said Fatty sarcastically: "You needn't look for big, hearty men necessarily when you are after a human stone crusher. Nay, nay! I met a little man once and shook hands with him in a friendly way, and for about three hours afterwards I was simply crazy with curiosity as to whether I had any hand or not. There was something on the end of my arm, but it looked and felt like a mullein leaf. Chuck O'Connors' nice, gentle, little pa did it!"

The boys howled.

"What a cheerful liar you are, Fat!" said Charlie, hammering Fatty between the shoulders.

"Straight goods!" said Fatty. "Why, even yet that poor hand has nightmares about it, and tries to get under the bed."

"Aw, you are crazy!" said Charlie.

"All right, then," said Fatty. "After this



I'll talk nothing but business. We are going to have an awful heavy day to-morrow, fellows. They tell me Thursday is the biggest day of the whole week. I've got to make the rounds and see that there's all sorts of corn and butter on hand. How are you coming with the checkroom, Clem? "

" Couldn't be better," declared Clem. " We are just coining money. All you have to do is to show people a little politeness, and lots of times they decide to leave two or three parcels, where they expected to leave only one. Once a woman wanted to leave her baby. It was asleep, and she said that it wouldn't wake up for a couple of hours, but I knew that if it did, I wouldn't know what to do with it; so I sent her on to the day nursery. De Forest went with her and carried the baby."

" Good old sport! " said Fatty, patting De Forest's chubby shoulder.

He blushed as he explained, " One couldn't do less. My word, that woman didn't weigh ninety pounds, and the baby weighed at least thirty! "

" It must be fierce to be one," said Fatty.

" A baby? " asked Chuck.

" No, no, *NO*," cried Fatty, " a *woman*! It must be fierce to be a *woman*."

" You can bet it's a lead pipe cinch to be a *kid*; lugged around and fed and put to sleep. Gee, they have the snap! I think of it every time I see one."



"See 'em all!" said the others, and Fatty strolled off alone.

As he passed the stand run by Spider Morrison and Geezer Reed, he saw that Slinky Mott was running the popper and Spider sat near, resting.

"Come with me, Spider, and see the sights."

"All right," said Spider. "Can you look out for things without my athistanth for a little, fel-loth? If tho, I'll go."

He laughed, and with Fatty started for the Midway where the side-shows were. As Fatty said, they did not want to improve their minds. What they wanted was *thrills*. Poor Fatty! Spider remembered afterwards what he had so carelessly said.

They idled down the noisy street lined by tents and gaudy show-houses tossed together for a single week. They saw the Strongest Man; and the Fattest Woman; and the Bearded Lady, and the Dwarfs. It was between meals for the Snake Eaters, evidently, for they were not eating any of the discouraged little garter snakes, which were curled up in the corners of the pen. They passed the Beauties of the Orient, because Fatty said they were nothing but girls, and the Egyptian Tumblers also, because Spider said one of them kept a shoe shining place right near where the suburban cars came in. Just beyond this was a long, low tent with a double rail inside leading past scores of boxes and booths and cages. Here

you really *did* get your money's worth. A dime to go in at one end and see it all. Fatty got a thrill first crack, because the girl standing up in front beside the barker had about ten feet of a dopy boa-constrictor around her neck, and its slow, switching tail brushed Fatty as he went in.

They began at the very beginning; and that was a sort of board pit within which, on two wobbly stools, sat the two fattest boys anyone ever saw. They were so much alike that Spider whispered to Fatty: "Thay, have you the leasth idea which one you're lookin' at? I don't know whether I'm theein' this one or some other one."

They wore tights, and seemed contented. They were eating ice-cream cones in large bites, but they said never a word. Fatty and Spider gazed at them for a long time. Finally they arose, brushed off the bits of cone with the backs of their pudgy hands, and still in silence fell upon each others' necks. They pulled and hauled, rocking to left and right.

"Now, what in Sam Hill do they think they are doin'?" asked Fatty.

"Wrestlin'," said a small boy, proudly.

"Well, well," said Fatty, "wouldn't that frost you? I'd never guess it, never in this world!"

As suddenly as they began, the boys parted and let themselves down gingerly upon their stools. One of them felt under a coat in the corner and brought out two bananas, one of which he handed



to his partner or brother or twin, as might be. They began to eat solemnly.

"Next!" said Fatty, and they went on, passing a cage where a mongrel collie slept peacefully. He was labeled: "*Wild Dog of Siberia.*"

Spider said he'd like to show 'em his bull pup. The Snake Lady's enclosure was next. She had returned and was just lifting the heavy, lazy snake from her bare shoulders.

"Gosh!" said Fatty. "When I'm president, I'm going to push through a law that women must have an allowance somehow, so that they won't have to make shows of themselves. It's awful!"

The boys glanced at the worn and tired face, and passed on. A great tank was next, and in it, all but his head under water, sat a man clothed in black Jersey bathing tights. The water was not very clear, and Fatty regarded him with disgust.

"Gee, I don't want to see his stunt!" he said. "He looks spoiled."

Next was an open cage strongly barred. It was set back a little and a space in front as long as the cage and about three feet in width was staked, and a rope stretched about. The placard at the top said, "*Wild-Cat — Beware.*"

The big brute lay against the bars at one end, fast asleep; but as they stared at him, he opened his eyes and regarded them with a look of concentrated hate. Cold, cruel and revengeful, his eyes held theirs.

"Mercy, Percy, how peeved you look!" said Fatty, reprovingly.

Spider leaned on the rail and stared at the animal's face.

"I don't like his sthyle a little bit!" he said. "Thee that paw hanging through the bars. It looks as limp and thoft as ragth; but I'll bet it could about tear you to piethes."

"I don't like his looks enough to stand and look at him myself," said Fatty. "Come on;" he pushed Spider along. "This is a bum show anyhow. Guess the only real thing in the joint is the wild-cat, and I guess he's pretty sleepy." He glanced back at the big animal in time to see a picture which haunted him for years. Even when Fatty was a grown man, with children of his own, he would wake in the night shuddering with horror of the picture that would not fade.

A little, curly-haired girl, left to herself while her family stood gazing at the snake charmers, had slipped under the ropes stretched before the big cage of the wild-cat, and calling "Kitty, kitty!" approached the dozing animal.

Fatty yelled, but too late. With a dimpling smile, the little one took hold of the great paw hanging between the bars. Like a flash the sleeping brute changed to a screaming, snarling picture of fury.

Deep into the tender baby's wrist sank the long claws, while the other paw, slipping through the

bars, drew the curly head close to the hot mouth and cruel fangs.

With one bound Fatty was beside her. Jerking up the corner stake, he thrust it through the bars and into the furious creature's face. Recognizing a new enemy, the wild-cat released his hold upon the child's arm, and struck at Fatty, tearing his left arm to the bone.

Heedless of his hurt, Fatty struck again and again at the brute's face. At the third blow, the wild-cat succeeded in seizing Fatty's arm, and seemingly satisfied to have some victim, dropped the child. Her arm and hand torn, and her golden curls red with blood, the little one fell fainting under the cage.

It was Spider who came to Fatty's rescue. Seizing another stake, he thrust the end into the creature's mouth. With a new cry of pain and fury, the animal released Fatty, to seize the torturing stick. The proprietor of the show came running up, too late, with a big iron rod.

In a crumpled heap beneath the cage the little one lay unconscious. A great crowd surged into the tent. The child's mother lay in a dead faint; beside her three children shrieked wildly. Other voices, women's and children's, took up the screams.

Far back in the corner of the cage, his eyes like balls of fire, his lips frothing, his long tail twitching, the wild-cat, crazy with the taste and smell

of blood, crouched for a spring. He lifted his voice in wild yells of rage that sounded far above the other sounds. Outside, in the tent, the crowd was packed solidly. The ambulance, summoned by someone from the Red Cross building, only got through when the crowd was beaten back by policemen. Tender hands picked up the poor, torn baby, and carried her out. Fatty, leaning heavily upon Spider's shoulder, groaned as Spider hurriedly twisted his handkerchief about the injured arm in an effort to stop the blood which poured down. "Good old Fatty—good old Fatty!" Spider kept saying to the pale and trembling boy. "Good old sport! Just keep a sthiff upper lip, my nith old Fatty, and you'll be all right."

"Sure thing!" said Fatty, shaking, in a whisper. "I'm all right. I'll be all right, I tell you, when they get the lights lit," and then Fatty, just as the ambulance doctor came running toward him, felt the pain leave and the darkness swallow him. He went down millions and millions of miles into it; and that was the last poor Fatty knew until he woke in the Red Cross building, faint and sick, and his bandaged left arm paining and burning almost harder than he could bear without groaning. He gritted his teeth and kept the groan in, and was glad of it, when he saw his own mother's pretty face near his. She was very pale and her lovely eyes were red.



"Hello, motherkin," said Fatty, in a wobbly voice. "Just what's the row? Oh, yes, I know! Oh, say mother, *don't* tell me I fainted! If I did, don't tell the fellows. Gee, how they would guy me!"

"Oh, son, son!" Mrs. Ransier cried. "How proud I am of you! And how it hurts me to have you hurt, my dear, dear lad!"

"I'm all right," said Fatty, bravely. "Mother, do you know if the little kid's all right? I wish you could find out somehow."

"She is all right, young man," said a doctor, suddenly appearing. "But you must not talk for a while, even with your mother. We cannot risk any fever, Mrs. Ransier."

"Of course not," said Mrs. Ransier. "We will not talk now."

"You may talk to him if you like. It might be a good thing if he gets restless; but he must not talk."

After feeling Fatty's pulse, the doctor went out.

"Fire ahead, mother," said Fatty. "What's the news since we met? Say, I'm going to keep a side-show when I'm older, just to show 'em!"

"You are going to keep *still*," said Mrs. Ransier, putting a pink finger on Fatty's lips. "I want to talk," and Fatty, pale with pain, lay and listened until at last, quieted by morphine, he slept.



In another room the doctors bent above the injured child.

"Only a half-inch more, and the claw would have torn the jugular," said one. "It was one of the most awful accidents I have ever heard of. Young Ransier saved her life. I don't comprehend yet how he moved and thought as quickly as he did. He got out of it luckily, at that. If his blood is good, he will be comparatively comfortable by morning, and by night I think he can go home, don't you? This is such a fearful noisy place."

"He can go if he is very careful," said the other doctor. "We will see, we will see!"

In the meantime the crowd still surged about the tent where the accident occurred. The police had finally succeeded in pressing the people back until the tent was empty, and then closed the flaps. Spider, held as a witness, sat on a box and watched a couple of cub reporters near the wild-cat's cage enact Fatty's part of the recent scene in order to write down the length of Fatty's leap.

An older reporter, spectacled and bald, questioned Spider considerably, while a young lady reporter, in a mannish jacket and a Fedora hat, sat beside Spider on his box and wrote feverishly.

It was not a large box and Spider was very much fussed. He was not experienced in the ways of young lady reporters, and lisped more than ever. He tried twice to rise, but she grasped

his coat tail with a firm and shapely hand and jerked him back. "Sit down!" she said crisply, but kindly.

"How far do you think your friend jumped when he leaped to the child's rescue?" asked the bald reporter.

"I don't know," said Spider.

"You *should* know," said the young lady reporter.

"Yes, I know I should," said Spider meekly. "I've been asked theven times tho far!"

"Well, we'll say he leaped seven feet," said the young lady reporter, glancing at the bald man.

"Is he long-legged?" asked the man, smiling.

"All legth!" said Spider. "Ath thoon ath he jumped, he sthuck hith arm in the cage and choked the wild-cat with one hand, while he got the child looth with the other."

The young lady reporter stopped writing and looked at him. "That's not true!" she said, severely.

"No," said Spider blandly, "but it goeth *tho* well with that theven foot jump that it theems a pity not to thay tho!"

## CHAPTER XI

### A VISIT FROM MR. BROWN

About two o'clock the following afternoon Fatty lay alone in his high, narrow, hospital bed. His mother and father had ridden back to the city to see that his room was in readiness and the nurse waiting. After the grounds closed for the night, Fatty was to be dressed and allowed to go home in his father's big car.

Fatty was very, very, very lonesome. He was not used to being in bed, and he did *not* like to be alone. Also the nurse worried him. She smiled in a firm, determined manner that made Fatty afraid to smile back, for fear she would not want him to. He never felt sleepy but she came noiselessly in, her arm jerking something up and down. It was a thermometer. She would thrust it under his tongue and, leaving it sticking out at a foolish angle, would say with her firm smile, "Keep it there, please!"

Then she would go away. After a few hours, as it seemed to Fatty, she would take it out and look at it. She always looked pleased except the time when she stayed away long enough for Fatty to whip it out and hold it on his hot water bag until he heard her rubbery footsteps returning. She

didn't like it then, and Fatty didn't either, for she sent for doctors and pulled down shades and wouldn't let the fellows in. And she smiled more firmly than ever, so that Fatty was afraid to tell what he had done. That convinced Fatty that you must *never* play tricks on a nurse *and* a thermometer.

Fatty looked idly around the room. One fly, the loneliest fly that Fatty had ever seen, climbed slowly up the wall.

Fatty felt so sorry for it that he hoped it would get behind something before the nurse and the thermometer came back. But the fly was slow, and while Fatty watched it, the door opened.

"Not that I approve," cried the nurse, jumping as usual into the middle of a sentence, "but your people—yes, I understand that they take the responsibility." Fatty said a silent farewell to the fly and turned toward the door. A dear, rough, familiar figure was advancing toward him.

"Wall, wall, Willyum!" said the visitor.

It was Mr. Brown of Lafayette.

"Gee Hoovers!" said Mr. Brown, letting himself gently down into a chair and shaking hands limply with Fatty. "Gee Hoovers, Willyum, this is too bad!"

"How did you hear?" said Fatty, who did not dream of the newspaper fame he had gained in a single night.

Both stopped to watch the nurse. She tiptoed!

close to the lonesome fly, smacked him with the corner of her heavy apron, then picking up his corpse she went smiling out of the room.

"*Awful* fidgety wimen is, even nurses," said Mr. Brown. "Wall, I tell you how I heern it. I was up at the school house getting red up for school openin' next week, and when I was restin' by a window for a minute, I seen Mis' Brown come steamin' up the street. Mis' Brown has hung over our gate a-lookin' after me a lots, off 'n on, but she ain't never chased me up, and I got worried when I seen her. I thought mabby the kitchen chimbley had fell — there's some loose bricks that had ought to be seen to. So I went to the door to meet her, and she says, 'Brown,' she says, 'come right home and put on your best pants. Willyum Ransier has got into a fight with a man-eatin' tiger that was bein' exhibited at the fair,' says she, 'and he's most et up.'

"I says, 'Woman, you're crazy, or else it's one of the boy's jokes.' "

"'No,' she says, 'it's in the paper,' and then she showed it to me. I must say, Willyum, that newspaper account made you out to goin' some, rasslin' with man-eatin' tigers and wrestin' great iron bars outer the cage to choke him with. I've a great idea of your powers, Willyum, but I own I was some took back. Mis' Brown, she shook my arm, and she kept sayin', 'Well, Hennery! Well, Hennery!' like a fonygraf — and finally she says, 'Well, Hennery, what do you think about it?'



"I says, 'Woman, us Scouts do seem to git right into the middle o' things that happen!' and then I started for the pants and here I be! I must say this ain't as bad as what really happened accordin' to the papers, and I'm glad of it.

"Ginerally, it's a disappointment when things ain't so bad as you hoped. It's like bein' called in to dinner from the woodpile and having just-side meat and cold potatoes, and findin' out that what you thought you smelt cookin' was just drippin' tryin' out."

Mr. Brown patted the thin hand as he looked around the bare room.

"I was never into a hospital before," he said. "I s'pose this is their idee of comfort. Now to me it looks skimpin' somehow. And that nuss!" His voice dropped to a hoarse whisper. "About the fly now! It didn't do no harm, did it? Jest one, so! I'd never a thought she'd seen it, but she did soon as she opened the door. She sort o' stiffened up the back. I thought course it was a mouse. An' it was only one fly! Well, they are all awful fidgety, Willyum."

"What did you do after you changed your clothes?" said Fatty, who liked details.

"I come on out," said Mr. Brown, simply. "But it was danged slow work. Lafayette was boilin'. The excitement was wuss than when Trotter's store burned up with Trotter and Tony Keene inside of it. Where are them boys, any-

how? ” said Mr. Brown, looking around the small room. “ I must say I thought they’d be sticking by your side.”

“ The nurse won’t let ’em in,” said Fatty. “ She says they are too excitin’. I say I wouldn’t fuss half so much if I could hear about things. I don’t know how the stands are doing or anything. I’d like to find out. Gee, it makes me crazy! The boys’ll think I’m a quitter! ”

“ Not in a general way they won’t,” said Mr. Brown, soothingly. “ How would it be for me to go and just take a squint at things? ”

“ Oh, *do!* ” said Fatty. “ Look around and come back and tell me.”

“ Good idee,” said Mr. Brown, rising slowly. He produced a little box. “ Mis’ Brown sent ye this,” he said, offering it. “ It’s some fruit pudden. She throwed it together while I was changin’ to come, but I guess it’s pretty tasty. According to the paper you was past pudden; but she had faith an’ here it is.”

“ I *bet* it’s good,” said Fatty, as Mr. Brown lumbered out of the room.

Fatty lay comfortably listening to the passing crowds and finally he slept. Mr. Brown, steering his slow way through the hot, eager crowd, bore down on the nearest popcorn stand.

“ Nickel’s worth o’ popcorn! ” he said, gruffly.

Spider Morrison, without looking up, handed him a hot, buttery bag and took the nickel.

"Thanks!" he said briefly and handed another bag to another customer. There was a crowd around the stand. Spider's part in the wild-cat scrimmage had made him a marked man. People came to stare, and incidentally spent money for popcorn.

"Ain't they gruff with customers?" said Mr. Brown to no one in particular. "Now if that young feller had spoken to me gentle, I'd a bought another bag!"

Spider looked up at the words, stared and flung himself upon Mr. Brown, to the amazement of the crowd.

"Hurrah, boys!" cried Spider. "Gee, Mither Brown, you do look good! Have you theen Fatty? How'th everything back in the old town? Folks changed much?"

"Yes," said Mr. Brown. "They're actin' kinder relieved and calm-like, last few days. Since Fair started 'twas. Folks says to me, they says, 'Ain't it real sweet and quiet now that Morrison boy has packed up and went off?'"

Spider laughed.

"Wall," said Mr. Brown, "I seen Willyum jest now, and he sent me on a tour of inspection. I got to report if you're tendin' to business. I see you be, so I'll go along. Which point of the compass does Tony occupy with that new fellar?"

"Right across there," said Spider, pointing, and Mr. Brown lumbered away. After he had vis-

ited all the popcorn stands and had bought a bag at each, he walked back to the entrance and leaned down to the little wicket where Clement and De Forest took charge of parcels and extra garments.

"What's your price for storin' a hat?" he asked.

"Five cents," said Clement courteously, handing him a check.

"I ain't got no extry hat," said Mr. Brown, "but I do like to know things."

De Forest, peering over his brother's shoulder, laughed suddenly.

"I'll bet you are Will's Mr. Brown from Lafayette," he said.

"The money's yourn!" said Mr. Brown, "What made you suspicion me?"

"I don't know," said De Forest. He went to the door and opened it. "Come in and visit with us a little while. This is not our busy time."

"Guess I will! Guess I will!" said Mr. Brown, who could never see a chair without wanting to occupy it. "I've done a good lot o' hustlin' to-day. It was something scandal'us the way I changed my cloze, and I come throo town so fast I didn't even take time to get a ice-cream sody."

"Why, let's have one now," said Clement. "It would taste good."

"Not yet, son, not yet," said Mr. Brown. "Let's set and get acquainted. See I like to get real close acquainted with every Boy Scout I know."

I heard Willyum talk some about you two. He has an awful good opinion of you, and he's got awful good judgment, Willyum has. I 'low a good deal on his judgment, and Willyum, he leans on me. We've done quite a little plannin' together, mostly when we was choppin' wood. You ain't never been to Lafayette, have ye? Funny,—it's so close to Syrchester. But all the better. It's like pickin' up a noo book. If ye like it, you're glad you ain't never read it before, and if it's stoopid, why, then you're glad also! But you'll like Lafayette when you git right into it. It is excitin' at times. This here is Clement, I bet," said Mr. Brown, studying the smiling boy. "There was earmarks Willyum said I'd know you by. What do they call you to home?"

"Clement and DeForest," said Clement, rubbing at the hated dimples, which he knew were the "earmarks."

"Ain't they awful stylish names to wear in your workin' cloze?" asked Mr. Brown.

"Why, it's funny," said Clement, "but we never had nicknames in our lives until just before we joined the Scouts. Then a fellow we knew hit on Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee with Dum and Dee for short. Of course, Dee is not bad, but I wouldn't stand for Dum, you can bet, so I had to give the chap a jolly good thrashing. So now they call DeForest, Dee, and they call me Kid, because I've had to fight a couple of times, I suppose. Kid Carroll —"



"Wall, that's nothin' to discredit you, and Kid's easy to say. I'm not for promiscyous scrappin'; but there *is* times when fightin' is as necessary as eatin', and most as pleasant."

"You are right," said "Kid" Carroll. "Funny how you feel about it, and when you fight for a principle or a duty, why, you have got twice the science. Just twice!"

"It's certainly *so*," said Mr. Brown. "I fit a feller twice my size once fer what might be called a triffin' offense by some, but, Gee Hoovers, it made me killin' mad. He was teasin' a couple o' kittens."

"What wath he doin' to 'em?" asked Spider Morrison, who had walked in while Mr. Brown was talking.

"Wall, he was teasin' 'em; that's enough said," said Mr. Brown grimly. "And of all the cowardly, low-down, mean, snide tricks in this world, teasin' animals is about the worst! I fit him, anyhow. I was about seventeen and he was two or three years older, and big! Lord, he was big! But I had the advantage at that because I didn't drink and I was fightin' for them poor, innocent, squallin' cats. I remember I mussed him up a good deal."

"Was he pretty groggy when he got up?" asked Clement with the air of a brother fighter.

"He didn't *get* up!" said Mr. Brown. "He was took home and nussed considerable first, and

his folks talked some about arrestin'. But a lot of folks seen it and, besides, they was the constable's cats."

"That wath bully!" said Spider, then stopped and gazed in horror at the wicket where the face of a young woman appeared. Her keen, blue eyes flashed across the four faces, her hair was brushed smooth as a boy's and she wore a Fedora hat.

She shook a pencil at Spider. "Hello, you Spider Morrison!" she said. "You see I remember your name. I'm not through with you yet!"

"Exthcuse me," said Spider politely, "I am not at home thith evening."

"Well, I don't want you now, anyway," said the young lady reporter. "I want to come in there and check my things. I am going up in the aeroplane."

DeForest opened the door and she stepped briskly in.

She took off her hat, and, opening a small bag, took out a half dozen hairpins and proceeded to skewer her hair still tighter. Then she took a small mirror from the bag.

"Hold that," she said to Spider. "You are an old pal of mine, you know. *Don't* let it wobble like that,—you make me dizzy!"

She took out a small box, and opening it, put a coat of powder on her smooth chin. Another trip into the bag's amazing interior, and a veil was closely tied around her head.

“Anybody got a sweater?” she demanded.

“Here’s mine,” said Kid Carroll.

“Thanks, that’s a dream,” said the strange young person, hustling into it. “Now who has got some pants clips?”

“Some *what*?” said Spider, feebly. He still held the looking glass.

“Clips — clips — clips that you use on a bicycle. There’s a pair now!” she cried, seizing a pair hanging on a wheel.

“But those are checked. You can’t have those,” cried DeForest.

“Oh, don’t be fussy,” said the young lady reporter. “If the fellow that owns them comes before I do, why, give him a quarter out of that bag you’ve got, Spider.

“I’ve got a chance to go up in an aeroplane, and it means a big write-up for me. I’ll make a whole column just out of my sensations. But I don’t want to look like a parachute, so I’m going to fasten my skirt with those clips. Ta-ta, boys, I’m off! I’ll throw you a kiss when we get up a thousand feet,” and skipped out, banging the door.

There was a stunned silence, then Mr. Brown said musingly: “I didn’t have a thing to donate but a celluloid collar and my jackknife. But if she’d wanted ’em, she’d a had ’em. My, *my*, ain’t I lucky Mis’ Brown ain’t built on them lines? Spider, she seems to be layin’ fer you pertickler.”

Spider groaned. "Don't talk about it," he said.

"She that bethide me on the thoap box yesterday, and I'll thwear she asthked me a million questions. And she kept thitting me down hard any time I tried to thneak away. When I told her the truth, she said it wath too tame; and when I made up thome, she thaid I lied. I *couldn't* pleath her! I bet sheth a good sport, at that. Leth go thee her fly."

They went out, leaving DeForest with the stand, and watched the big mechanical bird begin its graceful flight.

Then Mr. Brown, with a handshake all round started alone for the paddock, refusing the company which Spider and Kid Carroll fairly thrust upon him.

"Thank ye just the same, boys!" he said, "but I'm off on a little kind o' tear to-day, now I've seen that Willyum ain't chawed and clawed the way the papers said, and you'd likely be in the way. I might take to drinkin'," he added, stopping a small boy and buying a cone of pink ice-cream.

He dawdled along, his big, slow, kindly face turned here and there in search of new sights and amusements. When he reached the long curving stables where the horses had their clean, light, airy quarters, he scanned the names of the owners until he reached the big card bearing the name



of Colonel Asa Lee De Wolfe, Cloverdell Farms, Cloverdell, Ky. Mr. Brown turned in, and one by one studied the sleek beauties, each in its box stall. When he reached the stall with Alice's name above it, he leaned comfortably across the bar, and held a big hand out to the shining black mare.

"Wall, wall, peachie, you done 'em all up, didn't you?" he asked, as she wheeled at the sound of his little, clucking call, and thrust a slender muzzle into his coat pocket.

"Wall, I'd say you was just a mite spoiled! How'd you know I was loaded with candy just on the chance of meetin' you?"

"Why, you pretty, I'd like to a seen you race! But Willyum's going to tell me all about it, so it'll be most as good as seein' it."

A white moustached old man with a red face and big frame entered the stable, and cast a suspicious look at Mr. Brown, who turned a calm and kindly gaze upon him, and then held out a large and rather smudgy hand.

"I've an idee from what Willyum Ransier said that this is Colonel De Wolfe," he said. "I'm Brown, Hennery Brown of Lafayette —"

"I'm suttently pleased to meet you, sah," he said heartily. "Any friend of young Ransier is a friend of mine. A remarkable boy, Mr. Brown! It was wuth the trouble of the trip north to meet him; and he put me in touch with the most remarkable jockey I've ever seen. Why, that man Petahs is old enough to be shelved, but he's as



active as a boy and as agile as a monkey. And he knows horse talk. I've caught him talkin' to Alice every time he's here; and she understands every word of it. He's suttently a wonder! Why, that man could make any horse do whatever he liked. I wish I had someone like him at home."

"Well, it's only a question o' carfare, ain't it, Colonel? Did you put it to him?"

"It never occurred to me," said the Colonel, simply. "Why, I don't believe he'd consider it!"

"Why not?" asked Mr. Brown. "Have you hern about his daughter that the boys is tryin' to nuss back to life? Wall, if I was Peters, I'd rutther take that little girl down there and jockey for just house rent than to stay up here elevatin' and janiterin' for a livin'."

"A jockey gets big pay," said Colonel De Wolfe, staring at the little horse.

"Wall, that settles *that* end," said Mr. Brown easily. "Now about the little girl. How are you off down there fer climate?"

"Finest in the world!" exclaimed the Colonel.

"Wall, then there's *that* fixed," said Mr. Brown. "When would you say they orter start?"

The Colonel laughed. "You are certainly a hustler," he said.

"Not so very much, but see I'm a sort o' Boy Scout myself, so I haf to keep my end a movin'," said Mr. Brown.

"It is suttinly a fine plan," mused the Colonel.

"That's what it is," said Mr. Brown, "and I'm mighty glad the idee 'curred to you. Funny how you come to think of it!"

"It is funny," said the Colonel, looking slyly at the innocent Mr. Brown. "But at that, I do believe I couldn't do a bettah thing. It is high land all about us there at Cloverdell, but there is one fine little cottage on the estate that stands right up on a knoll. You can see foh miles from the porch, and the rivah is only a quarter of a mile away. There's a beautiful garden with the little place. It is empty now. I could let Petahs have it just as well as not, and he's the best jockey I ever saw."

"Wall, then that's off our minds," said Mr. Brown. "I hope somebody sets Peters down careful before he gets this thing broke to him. It would seem kind of overcomin' after elevatin' and janiterin'."

Once more he solemnly shook hands with Colonel De Wolfe. "By Gee-Hoovers, Colonel, I really must say I b'lieve that's the best idee you ever had!"

## CHAPTER XII

### SAVED.

Mr. Brown, having parted reluctantly from Colonel De Wolfe, whom he dubbed a "fine old feller with mighty good idees," hastened at his best pace to tell Fatty all the news.

It was almost time for the gates to close and the crowds were hurrying towards the entrance. As he approached the Red Cross building, he was surprised to see a stocky, well-built youth dash madly around the corner of the building and hide behind a wagon that was there.

When Mr. Brown came nearer, the boy thrust out a cautious head, and gave the Scout salute. Mr. Brown turned to go to him, but Spider — for Spider it was — waved him frantically back, pointing as best he could around the corner of the building to the front steps. Mr. Brown looked. There, not five feet away, gazing eagerly in the opposite direction, was the young lady reporter.

"Hello! Do you happen to know where that Spider Morrison kid is?"

"Why, he must be on the grounds som'ers, ain't he, Ma'am?" answered Mr. Brown, weakly.

"You would think so," she said. "I have been hunting for him everywhere, and I've almost run him down a dozen times."

"Wall, wall!" said Mr. Brown, approaching the corner of the building where he could talk to the young lady and still keep an eye on Spider.

"Now, Ma'am, I've knowed that boy quite a spell; fifteen or sixteen year off an' on, I should say, and I never knowed him to do anythin' what you might call wuth reportin'. He ain't been elopin' or forgin', or any of them reely up-to-date tricks, has he, now?"

The young lady reporter laughed.

"Oh no, hardly," she said. "I just want him to give me an interview that I can publish about the Boy Scouts. Spider is so refreshingly original, and his lisp is so cunning."

Behind the wagon, Spider hit himself violently in the head with his clenched fist, and kicked an imaginary boy.

"Wall, I'm afraid he ain't much on intervoos, Spider ain't," Mr. Brown mused. "I notice he avoids 'em as much as he kin when the Principal of the High School gits anxious to see him. Sometimes it's reel pinte the way he gits around bein' intervood. I've seen Mr. Foure, our Principal, what you might call reel put out about it. Now it ain't that way with me; I'm alwus reel pleased to talk, especially when I can git a smart, perky young lady like you to converse with."

"Thank you," said the young lady reporter awkwardly. Compliments were not in her line. Besides, she wanted Spider Morrison.



"I think that I will just sit down here and wait," she said, suddenly dropping down on the step. "He's bound to come back, because he's left his coat inside!"

"Why, what's his coat doin' here if Spider ain't in it?" asked Mr. Brown in surprise.

"He came to see the Ransier boy, and went out on an errand, and it was then that I began to miss him. Of course," added the young lady reporter with frightful cocksureness, "it is annoying to hang around and waste time like this, but I'll get him sooner or later."

"Ain't it nice to feel like that — so sure and settled?" said Mr. Brown appreciatively. "It must save an awful lot of guessin'. Now from what I know o' Spider, I ain't never sure I'm speakin' to him unless I got him by both laypels, and a hollerin' in his ear. When you got to send in your write-up?"

"Tonight," said the young lady, uneasily.

The farm wagon behind which Spider had taken refuge was a large one. There was some straw in the deep box, and Spider, with a sad farewell wave of his hand toward Mr. Brown, cautiously climbed over the wheel and laid down.

"Got to get it all wrote up and in tonight, eh?" said Mr. Brown. "Wall, that don't give ye much time, now does it?"

"No," she said, "but, you see, he will come back for his coat."



"I wouldn't lot on it," said Mr. Brown. "Leastways, not too much. Spider ain't sot on coats. I knowed him leave a good one up the Methodist steeple when he was climbin' up there after doves. He tied it on the bell clapper for safe keepin' goin' up, and comin' down he was so busy holdin' the doves with two hands and hangin' on with the rest of his self that he clean fergot it. That was a Sat'day night an' nex' day the bell rung kind o' muffled and holler. Lord! Some o' the good folks took it fer a sign, and fer three weeks there was the rousinist meetin's!"

"What happened then?" asked the young lady.

"Somebuddy went up and investigated. It was alwuz that way,—some fool investigatin'. An' there he found that coat tied on by the sleeves, with Spider Morrison's 'rithmetic papers in it."

The lady reporter laughed.

"What did the people think, who had taken it for a sign?"

"They never knowed, because what they didn't know wouldn't hurt 'em."

"Who found the coat?" asked the reporter.

"I done it," said Mr. Brown. "So I just give it to Spider. An' this just shows what a feller will do fer a lady. I never told that before. I bet if Spider could see you, just see you a settin', and a waitin' on that step, that he'd fairly scorch things to git here and tell you everything he knows."

Mr. Brown rolled a cautious eye toward the wagon, and met a glare of fury from the boy whose head was cautiously lifted over the edge of the box.

"Well, I wish that he would come," said the girl. "I can't wait more than half an hour longer."

"I can't wait much longer myself," said Mr. Brown. "I got to see Willyum, and report some Scout business, and git home. I dunno what the woman will say to me now."

"You needn't stay with me," said the reporter. "I can rest here as well as anywhere else."

In the wagon two stout legs kicked sadly in the air. The young lady settled herself comfortably, then, being a woman as well as a reporter, she suddenly changed her mind.

"Come to think of it," she said, "I'll go after his chum, that Geezer kid. I'll get his ideas and put in the lisp." She briskly tucked her pad and pencil into her handbag, and arose. "If Spider comes, you might say that I want to get hold of him."

She walked swiftly away, without further good-bye, and as soon she was at a safe distance, Spider leaped from the wagon and joined Mr. Brown, who was contentedly cutting a large chunk from a brown square of tobacco.

"Wall, wall, Spider! Where you bin keepin' yourself," he asked gravely. "I got a message

fer you. A young lady wanted me to say that she wanted to get a-hold of you."

"By golly, I'll eat my hat if she ever doth!" cried Spider. "That girl hath sthpoiled everything for me. I'm thimply worn out!"

"It's your fault for bein' so refreshin'ly original, and havin' that cute, cunnin' lisp," said Mr. Brown cruelly. "Spider, I got a handle on you now, son. If you don't walk chalk this winter sure's I'm school janitor, I'll tell Willyum, and I guess you kin sorter surmise the rest."

"Well, I'll thay one thing, Mithter Brown, ith all off with uth if you ever tell thith," said Spider, hurrying ahead into the hospital.

They found Fatty impatiently awaiting them.

"Gee, you came near staying all night!" he said, fretfully.

"Wall, Willyum, you give me a good lot to see to, and I had to do a little life-savin' on the side."

"You are so late I can't hear about it anyhow," said Fatty. "Father will be here in about ten minutes. Help me with my clothes, will you? I don't want that nurse fiddling around."

It was slow work dressing with the hurt and feverish arm to guard and Fatty found that he was too weak to stand without assistance. When the automobile came, Mr. Brown coolly picked him up and carried him out and into the big tonneau.

Mr. Ransier had both cars. He drove the big

car himself, while the chauffeur took the roadster, and they both went back to the city loaded with boys, Fatty leaning against Mr. Brown and held firmly by his strong and tender arm.

It was a week later before Mr. Ransier, who had volunteered to attend to Fatty's part of the Fair business, was ready to call a meeting of the five Boy Scouts who stood together for Alice Peters in what Fatty called the "Defiance Club."

Fatty was much better. His wholesome, clean blood had repelled the poison in the claws of the wild-cat, and the painful wounds were healing nicely. Dr. Carroll, with the excuse of going to see how Alice was progressing, had carried Colonel De Wolfe off for an automobile trip to the North Woods.

On the evening of the day set for their return, the boys met Mr. Ransier at his apartment. When the two Carrolls came in it was evident that they were laboring under great excitement.

"What's eatin' you?" Fatty inquired peevishly, from his divan. "Gosh, you've got something on your minds! Look at 'em!" he said, turning to Spider, who was spending Saturday and Sunday with him. "Look at 'em! I hope I may never see such a pair of chessy-cats."

Clem Carroll laughed outright.

"Awfully sorry not to explain, old chap," he said. "But it's not my funeral, so I can't tell. It will all come out in a little while."



Fatty grunted. He wasn't strong for secrets when he was on the outside. He was still scowling when the door opened and Colonel De Wolfe came in followed by Doctor Carroll. They too wore an air of pleasant mystery and Fatty gritted his teeth. He looked at the two Carrolls and for the first time noted the great change in the boys. The fat Carrolls had disappeared. New interests and manly aims, better hours and hard exercises had changed the two boys almost past recognition. The hated dimples still remained but scarcely showed in the new firm leanness of cheek and jaw. The fat was disappearing from their bodies, leaving a sturdy squareness of build which delighted their father.

Mr. Ransier proceeded at once to the business part of the meeting.

"As Will was laid up, someone else had to take charge of his share of the Fair business," said Mr. Ransier. "So I have settled things for him and wish to submit my report."

He laid in the hands of each person present a neatly typewritten page covered with figures. There was silence for a few moments, then Dee Carroll whistled softly, and everybody began to talk at once. Such an amount from a week's hard work they had never hoped for nor dreamed of.

"Rather remarkable results, don't you think?" he asked.

"Puffectly amazin'," the Colonel exploded.



"Yes, suh, absolutely astoundin' ! I will say, young gentlemen, that I am proud to know men of youah ability and attainments. To make a sum like that and devote it to such a cause is worthy of the highest type of manhood. As I have been given to understand, you were the means of discovahin' this po' young girl, by some fo'tunate accident" — The boys threw sheepish and guilty glances at each other — "and you detuhmined to fight death away from her."

Mrs. Ransier flashed a bright smile at the lads. "It was the Scouts' Defiance," she said.

"A most noble one," said the Colonel. "I can tell you now, confidentially, suhs, that that po' Petahs has confessed to me that at the time you fohtunately discovahed his secret, that he was neah stahvation ! His po' little wages were goin' every cent foh comforts foh that sweet, sufferin' child. It was a beautiful sacrifice, friends, and po' Petahs richly deserves all the assistance thet you can give him. Now I have one or two little suggestions to offah, and as they consuhn Petahs, it might be well to call him. Don't vou think so, Ransier? "

"Decidedly yes," said Mr. Ransier, and started to the door.

"Let me go!" said Mrs. Ransier; "I do not think that I can quite stand being here when you tell him."

The boys looked grave, and thought of Alice.

Was she worse? It suddenly occurred to Fatty and Chuck and Tony that Dr. Carroll had not mentioned her name. Chuck turned to Tony and whispered, "Bet she is goin' to croak!" Chuck was always slangy when he was worried. Tony with his eyes on the Carroll boys' beaming faces, shook his head.

As Peters entered the door, pushed in by Mr. Ransier, the boys felt their fears set at rest. Alice must be better, for a look of perfect peace overspread Peters' thin face.

Colonel De Wolfe shook him heartily by the hand.

"Petahs, I congratulate you. Doctah Carroll and the othahs told me the good news about youah daughtah, and when I saw her, I made up my mind quite unofficially that the little girl was well on the way to recovery."

"Thanks to you, sir, and thanks to everyone," said Peters. "Yes, sir, Dr. Carroll tells me that my Alice is going to be well again."

He suddenly clinched his bony hands and in his thin cheeks the knobs rose and fell.

"Oh, I hates to ferget I'm a man, gentlemen, but I can't forget that I'm a father, too; and you'll have to overlook it, if all your wonderful kindness almost makes me cry. I ain't got a way to thank you—I don't know a word fit; but just you look at my little Alice, gentlemen, and you'll guess a bit of what I feel. Why, with what

the Colonel gives me for the race, and the wonderful lot the young gentlemen made, *I've* got a new hold on life as well as she."

His face quivered; and he looked wistfully at the Scouts. "I tell you, I don't know how to thank you boys," he said huskily, "but Alice and I will pray God bless you every day of our lives."

The boys, badly embarrassed by the poor little man's gratitude, wriggled uneasily.

"That's nothing," said Fatty at last, as no one else offered to speak. "It was just Scout work, you know."

"Then God bless the Boy Scouts!" said Peters fervently; and the Colonel added a hearty "Amen."

"Well, you still have fine news to hear, Peters," said Doctor Carroll, "so you must pick yourself up and bear good fortune as manfully as you underwent sorrow. Listen to what the Colonel has to say."

"I wish that youah friend Brown was heah," said the Colonel, smiling. "He has a genius for putting good ideas into othah people's haid and I'll bet that he's good at explainin' 'em. But he's not present, so to be short, Petahs, I am plannin' to take you and Alice home to Clovahdell with me. I need you as a jockey, Petahs, and I'm afraid I will have to have you. In fact they are renovatin' youah little cottage now; and I got word this mohnin' that it will be all ready next week. I've

got a nice ole black Mammy to look aftah youh chile, and that will give you plenty of time to work out the colts. And this heah magnificent sum the boys have eahned, and what you don't need to spend of youah racin' money, would make her a nice little nest-egg, Petahs. You see, she'll need schoolin' when she's strongah, Petahs, and theah you ah! "

There was a long silence, then Peter looked up, his face pale glowing with happiness.

"It will be heaven," he said simply.

"Then it is all settled," said the Colonel briskly, clearing his throat.

The door opened, and Mrs. Ransier entered, leading by the hand a fair young girl in whose face the clear color of health already glowed.

"Ah," said Dr. Carroll, "here is our patient now! "

The girl bowed prettily, and the boys, with the exception of the two Carrolls, who came forward and greeted her easily, all froze into awkward positions beside their chairs.

"She can only stay for a moment," said Mrs. Ransier, grasping the situation with her usual quickness, and talking rapidly. "I thought Mr. Ransier would like to see how well she looks."

"I should say I would!" said Mr. Ransier, heartily clasping the girl's little hand. "This is certainly a pleasure, Miss Alice! "

"She says she is not a bit tired after that long



automobile ride, doctor," continued Mrs. Ransier. "Isn't that wonderful? Now she is going to be very quiet for a day or two, and then she will be ready to have us all come up to see her. So you see we will have to hurry away now." Mrs. Ransier cast a mischievous glance at her son. "If you can spare us," she added.

Fatty glared back. How his mother did love to tease! It was not until he heard the spring latch click that he was sure that the girl was really gone, and that his mother and Peters had gone with her. He sighed—a long breath of relief. Fatty sat moodily peering into the future. It was full of girls. He could read his fate—his awful fate—there.

As he pondered, the Colonel spoke.

"Well, doctah, and Ransier, I must be goin' along. This has been a most enjoyable meetin', suhs, and I would like to say that it is a pity that theah are not moh Boy Scouts than theah ah. I shall see to it pussonally that the Clovahdell boys become Boy Scouts, if I have to get these heah boys to come down and teach them. I tell you, boys, the earnestness of puppose, the defense of the weak and helpless, the chivalry toward womanhood that you have shown in this affaih, has touched me to the very heah. I suttently am proud to know you all. And next yeah, if we all ah alive, I'm goin' to send my cah up and get you all down to Clovahdell foh the summah."



Fatty sat up. "Great Caesar's ghost, Colonel, do you really mean it?"

"On the honah of a gentleman, suh!" he said.

Fatty looked at the boys. "We all accept," he said solemnly.

"This includes you, too, Morrison," added the Colonel to the unusually silent Spider. "You ought to come in on this, if only foh what the reportahs have made you suffah."

"I'm a million times obliged," said Spider, his fine eyes lighting up. "But it wath really only one reporter, the young lady one. Merthy me, I'll never thee a Fedora hat or a penthil without thuddering!"

"It has been an eventful summer," said Doctor Carroll, rising, "and it has had a happy sending. Little John is well again, and Kid O'Connors has found his brother. Alice is going to recover her health, and Peters will be able to give her a comfortable, happy home. Will has saved a child from a frightful death, though at some cost to himself. My sons have become just the boys that I wanted them to be, and all these things have come about through the Boy Scouts, and their Defiance.

"True enough," said Mr. Ransier. "And I've left one piece of good news for Will until the last. I'm through here, son. We are going back to Lafayette!"

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